

LONDON SOCIETY.

APRIL 1882.

THE QUEEN AND OUR ROYAL FAMILY IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

WE take up once more some gleanings from contemporary literature, to which we add some facts and comments of our own, on the subject of our gracious Majesty the Queen, with whose mild and beneficent rule Providence has blessed us so long and so signally. We need hardly say that we do so with a feeling of quickened loyalty, now that her Majesty, through the same kindly Providence, has been saved from the bullet, whether of madman or assassin, that might have taken the life so beloved and honoured by us all. Seven times has such an attempt been made; it is now ten years since the last, and we may trust that this recurrence is the very last. We spare ourselves and our readers the pain of glancing at these seven treasonable acts, except so far as they uniformly illustrate the unshaken nerves and high personal courage of the Queen. We have seen how such acute observers and good judges as Lord Campbell and the Baroness Bunsen have spoken of the Queen's wonderful strength of character, and the royal heart and nerve that she must possess. Such high-toned courage necessarily has its springs more in moral than in physical causes. Of what kind such courage is may be learned from such a

poem as Wordsworth's 'Happy Warrior.' This poem gives the best account of courage since Aristotle's *Ethics*, and is indeed a better one. There are some lines, indeed, that seem peculiarly to describe her Majesty's character:

'Whose powers shed round him in the
common strife
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
And who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment, to which Heaven
has joined
Great issues, good or bad, for human
kind,
Is happy as a lover, and inspired;
And through the heat of conflict keeps
the law
In calmness made, and sees: what he
foresaw;
Or, if an unexpected call succeed
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
Whom neither shape of danger can dis-
may,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth
stand fast,
Looks forward persevering to the last,
From well to better daily self-surpassed.'

In some respects her Majesty illustrates the doctrine of Atavism, for the heroic courage shown by her grandfather, George the Third, on a similar occasion has been displayed again in the third generation, as well as those many simple sterling qualities for which, as Thackeray truly said, the heart of the nation will always beat kindly towards the good old King. There were some remarks made in the two Houses of Parliament which

well deserve being retained in a permanent form, and which illustrate our subject. Great statesmen who have grown gray in the service of the Crown gave their attestation to her Majesty's queenly conduct and demeanour. 'I remember,' said Earl Granville, 'as if it were yesterday, that in 1850, Lord John Russell, a man of singularly calm and collected character, told me immediately after an outrage on the Queen that he was perfectly astonished at the courage her Majesty exhibited at that moment. Thirty-two years have elapsed since that time, and it is possible that her Majesty has suffered some diminution of physical strength, but the same brave spirit which characterised her Majesty at that time has remained to this day. The first inquiry of the Queen was whether any one was hurt. She next expressed her appreciation of the courage of the Princess Beatrice. It is with the highest satisfaction that I state—and I state it on the highest authority, that of the illustrious Prince who has only just left the Queen—that after this attempt, which was enough to shock the nerves of the bravest man, he left her Majesty in the enjoyment of the same health as she possessed before the attempt.' Mr. Gladstone had some interesting words: 'Her Majesty has deeply felt that sentiment of thankfulness which ever overpowers and overshadows the sentiment of pain on this occasion. She has felt it not only for herself, but for the other lives which were wickedly and recklessly exposed, even with a more absolute want of cause or pretext than might be said to be the case in the instance of her Majesty. The Princess Beatrice, we are rejoiced to learn, has shown on this occasion remarkable courage, together

with an entire forgetfulness of herself, in her absorption in the attempt upon the life of her illustrious mother.' 'We cannot but feel,' said Sir Stafford Northcote, 'that she who has always been so prompt in her sympathy for others has a claim upon our sympathy, independently even of considerations of loyalty. We cannot but feel that it would have been strange if a Sovereign who commands so much of the respect and sympathy of foreign nations, and who has never been slow to express her own sympathy with others in misfortune, had not received such assurances.'

Perhaps the earliest mention of the Princess Victoria is to be found in a letter written by the illustrious Wilberforce to a friend in her way illustrious—Hannah More. Writing on July 21, 1820, Wilberforce says: 'In consequence of a very civil message from the Duchess of Kent I waited on her this morning. She received me with her fine animated child on the floor by her side, with its playthings, of which I soon became one. She was very civil; but as she did not sit down, I did not think it right to stay above a quarter of an hour.' Leigh Hunt, in his pleasant book on the *Old Court Suburb*, says: 'We remember well the peculiar pleasure which it gave us to see the future Queen, the first time we ever did see her, coming up a cross path from the Bayswater Gate, with a girl of her own age by her side, whose hand she was holding as if she loved her. A magnificent footman in scarlet came behind her, with the splendor of a pair of calves in white stockings which we ever beheld. He looked somehow like a gigantic fairy, personating for his little lady's sake the grandest kind of footman he could think of; and his calves he seemed

to have made out of a couple of the biggest chain lamps in the possession of the godmother of Cinderella.' An interesting passage is to be found in the second volume of Lord Albemarle's autobiography. Lord Albemarle says: 'One of my occupations of a morning, while waiting for the Duke, was to watch from the windows the movements of a bright, pretty little girl, seven years of age. She was in the habit of watering the plants immediately under the window. It was amusing to see how impartially she divided the contents of the watering-pot between the flowers and her own little feet. Her simple but becoming dress contrasted favourably with the gorgeous apparel now worn by the little damsels of the rising generation—a large straw hat and a suit of white cotton, a coloured fichu round the neck was the only ornament she wore. The young lady I am describing was the Princess Victoria, now our gracious Sovereign, whom may God long preserve!' Mr. Charles Knight, in his *Passages of a Working Life*,* has a similar and very interesting passage. In the early morning, when hardly any one was astir in Kensington Palace Gardens, he used to watch the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria, attended by a single page, breakfast in the open air. Mr. Hedderwick, the Glasgow poet, who has always had an audience, fit, though few, says:

'Once, as I strayed a student, happiest
then
What time the summer's garniture was on,
Beneath the princely shades of Kensington,
A girl I spied, whose years might number ten,
With full round eyes and fair round
English face.'†

An extremely interesting refer-

* Vol. ii. p. 57.

† *Lays of Middle Age*.

ence is made by Moore to the royal skill in music in the *Diary of Thomas Moore*, edited by Lord John Russell:

'Oct. 20th, 1830.—Have been invited to Watson Taylor's to meet the Duchess of Kent and young Victoria. About half-past five the Duchess and Princess arrived; found that Sir J. Conroy, their attendant, was an old acquaintance of mine. . . . Music in the evening. The Duchess sang a duet or two with the Princess Victoria, and several very pretty German songs by herself. One or two by Weber and Hummel particularly pretty, and her manner of singing just what a lady's ought to be. No attempts at *bravuras* or graces, but all simplicity and expression. I also sung several songs, with which H.R.H. was pleased to be pleased. Evidently very fond of music, and would have gone on singing much longer if there had not been rather premature preparations for bed.

'25th.—After breakfast the Duchess expressed a wish for a little more music, and she and the Princess and myself sung a good deal. The Duchess sung over three or four times with me, 'Go where glory waits thee,' pronouncing the words very prettily, and altogether singing with more taste than any one I ever found. Repeated also her pretty German songs, and very graciously promised me copies of them, having intimated how much she should like to have copies of those songs I had sung for her.*

We may quote a little further from Lord Albemarle:

'In the summer of 1835 my sister, Lady Anne Coke, summoned me to Holkham, to help her to do the honours in receiving the Princess Victoria and the Duchess of Kent. Great were

* Vol. vi. p. 154.

the preparations on the occasion. Their Royal Highnesses were expected at dinner, but they were detained two hours by bankers (navvies) of Lynn, who, in an excess of loyalty, insisted on drawing the royal carriage through the town. . . . Soon after their Royal Highnesses appeared in person. Both were most affable. The youthful Princess in particular showed in her demeanour that winning courtesy with which millions of her subjects have since become familiar.

'In June of this year died William IV. I was one of the crowd that saw his youthful successor on the day of her proclamation. She appeared at the open window of the Privy Council Chamber in St. James's Palace, looking on the quadrangle nearest Marlborough House. Never shall I forget the enthusiastic cheers which greeted the slight graceful figure of the illustrious young lady, nor the thrill of chivalrous loyalty that ran through the assembled multitude. At the sound of the first shouts the colour faded from the Queen's cheeks, and her eyes filled with tears. The emotion thus called forth imparted an additional charm to the winning courtesy with which the girl-Sovereign accepted the proffered homage.'

Even the sardonic Greville writes with a positive glow of feeling: 'I particularly watched her when Melbourne and the Ministers and the Duke of Wellington and Peel approached her. She went through the whole ceremony, occasionally looking at Melbourne for instruction when she had any doubt what to do, which hardly ever occurred, and with perfect calmness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and ingratiating. Peel said how amazed he was at her apparent deep sense

of her situation, her modesty, and at the same time her firmness. He could not have wished that a daughter of his own had acted in the least degree differently.' Earl Russell, in his autobiographical work, gives an interesting remark of the Queen's, interesting in its simplicity and trustfulness: 'Queen Victoria, conscious of her own love of truth and justice, told her mother, the Duchess of Kent, that she ascended the throne without alarm.'*

In the second volume of the *Life of Leslie*, the painter, we have a series of interesting references to the Queen. The first is a visit which she paid to the Royal Academy when princess:

'About four o'clock the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria came, without any ceremony, in the midst of the company, having sent us word in the morning that they intended doing so. This was never done before, their visits on other occasions being strictly private. The little Princess has all the charms of health, youth, and high spirits. She could have seen little of the exhibition, as she was herself, from the moment of entering the room, the sole object of attraction; and there were so many people among the nobility present whom she knew, and every one of whom had something to say to her. She heard that Charles Kemble was in the room, and she desired he might be presented to her; which gave him an opportunity of making one of his best genteel comedy bows. She shook hands and chatted with Mr. Rogers.'

When the young Queen was crowned Leslie goes to the coronation:

'I was obliged to hire a Court dress for the occasion, and ap-

* Earl Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 264.

peared for the first and last time of my life with a sword by my side. I was very near the altar and the chair in which the Queen was crowned; and when she signed the coronation oath I could see that she wrote a large bold hand. . . . The Queen, I am told, had studied her part very diligently, and she went through it extremely well. I don't know why, but the first sight of her in her robes brought tears into my eyes, and it had this effect on many people; she looked almost like a child. She is very fond of dogs, and has one very favourite little spaniel, who is always on the look-out for her return when she has been from home. She had, of course, been separated from him on that day longer than usual; and when the State coach drove up to the steps of the palace, she heard him barking with joy in the hall, and exclaimed, "There's Dash!" and was in a hurry to lay aside the sceptre and ball she carried in her hands, and take off the crown and robes, *to go and wash little Dash*. . . . Before the pictures were removed from the exhibition the little Queen paid it a visit. She did not go in State—that is with a guard of soldiers—and the policemen and her footmen had great difficulty in keeping the crowd from incommoding her when she alighted at the Academy. Her mother was with her, and she was attended by the Duchess of Sutherland, the Marchioness of Tavistock, and two young ladies, whose names I did not hear. These, with Lord Albemarle, and two young gentlemen, completed her suite. They were all dressed very plainly in mourning; and there was nothing to distinguish the Queen from the other ladies but a long train, which was not, however, held up. She looked very pretty; and none of the engravings yet published do

her anything like justice. Chalon has made a splendid drawing of her, whole length, in the robes of state; and when an engraving of this gets to America you will know how she looks. Her manner is unaffectedly graceful; and towards her mother she appears the same affectionate little girl we saw at the Academy on the 1st of May, still calling her "mamma." Before leaving the rooms the President presented each of us to her separately, at her own request, and she afterwards took occasion to address a word or two to each by name. She asked me how many pictures I had there, and if I did not think it a very fine exhibition. . . . Wilkie has painted her at her first council, which took place immediately on the news of the death of the King reaching London. There are an immense number of figures; and the peculiarity of the subject—a young girl of eighteen, unattended by any other female, taking her place at the head of a long table, and surrounded by all the great dignitaries of the Church, State, and Law, is very striking. She is dressed very simply, in white (for it is not the etiquette that she should be in mourning till after the funeral of the King); and this adds to her innocent and dove-like appearance. . . . We got to Windsor, however, a very few minutes past ten, and I have established myself in the pleasant bedroom we had together. I had no sittings, nor have I seen her Majesty, who rode out. I was glad to find Lord Melbourne is here; and I sent a message to him to request a sitting to-morrow, and received for answer that he will do so *with pleasure*. . . . I found at the castle a letter from Lady Holland waiting for me, full of kind expressions, and the congratulations of Lord Holland and herself. . . .

She has heard from Lord Melbourne and Lady Cowper that the Queen is *extremely pleased with the picture*. . . . Lord Melbourne sat this morning like a good Prime Minister; but was called away, and will sit again to-morrow; and the Duchess of Kent sent word she would prefer sitting to-morrow instead of to-day, and I was obliged to acquiesce. . . . The composition was entirely arranged on the canvas, and the Queen seemed much pleased when she saw it. At the conclusion of the sitting she said she would sit again the next day; and a few minutes after she left the room the Marquis of Conyngham (Lord Chamberlain) came in, and asked me if the picture was bespoken. He said he knew her Majesty would like to have a picture of mine, and he thought she would prefer this subject to any other. . . . The Queen has sat five times. She is now so far satisfied with the likeness that she does not wish me to touch it again. She sat not only for the face, but for as much as is seen of the figure, and for the hands with the coronation ring on her finger. Her hands, by the bye, are very pretty; the backs dimpled and the fingers delicately shaped. She was particular also in having her hair dressed exactly as she wore it at the ceremony every time she sat. She has suggested an alteration in the composition of the picture, and I suppose she thinks it like the scene; for she asked me where I sat, and said, "I suppose you made a sketch on the spot". . . . Every day lunch is sent to me, which, as it is always very plentiful and good, I generally make my dinner. The best of wine is sent in a beautiful little decanter, with a V.R. and the crown engraved on it; and the table-cloths and napkins have the royal arms and other insignia on them as a

pattern. . . . Her Majesty is to sit again this week (I hope, for her sake, for the last time). She is extremely obliging, and puts me in high spirits about the picture, by liking it very much. . . . I received six hundred guineas for the Queen's picture. This was the price fixed by myself, and which I had previously named to the gentleman I was to paint it for before she expressed a wish to have it. I did not think it right to ask the Queen more. Never was sovereign who spent royal money in a way more creditable to the spender than she does—and this is great praise.'

In an American periodical we have a further anecdote obtained from Mr. Leslie:*

'I was in London in 1838, and was present with my excellent friend, the late Charles R. Leslie, R.A., at the imposing ceremonies of the coronation of the Queen in Westminster Abbey. He then related to me the following incident, which I think may truly be said to have been the first act of her reign: When her predecessor, William IV., died, a messenger was immediately despatched by his Queen (then become by his death Queen Dowager) to Victoria, apprising her of the event. She immediately called for paper, and indited a letter of condolence to the widow. Folding it, she directed it "To the Queen of England." Her maid of honour in attendance, noticing the inscription, said, "Your Majesty, you are Queen of England!" "Yes," she replied; "but the widowed Queen is not to be reminded of the fact first by me."

Some interesting stories are told of the early days, when the Queen was obliged to sign death warrants, before she was relieved from

* Mr. J. B. Thorne in *New York Journal of Commerce*.

that odious duty, and a sign-mannual substituted by Act of Parliament. On several occasions the Queen may be said to have begged off the life of offenders. And on one occasion, 'with a hand trembling from eagerness and emotion, she wrote "pardoned" across the fatal scroll.'

There are a great many floating anecdotes respecting her Majesty circulating in society. It is to be hoped, and it is probable, that some of the best of these are among the literary treasures in reserve. Some of these are common property, one might almost say; but it would be difficult to give them in a perfectly accurate form, or submit them to any process of verification. They are interesting, they redound to the credit of the Sovereign and of human nature; but the time of publication has not yet come. It is also to be said that a great degree of reticence is very properly imposed on all connected with the Court. Her Majesty, on principle, has always steadily discouraged anything in the way of gossip or trivial conversation respecting the affairs of the household. So many persons are brought into passing, and somewhat intimate, connection with royalty, that it is obvious that the sanctity of the *vis intime* of the Court could not be obtained unless such a rule were carefully observed. We remember knowing a lady, who was credited with being a private correspondent of her Majesty's for years, from her youth; but the most distant allusion to this interesting circumstance never escaped her. Others, though not quite so reticent, are always guarded and careful. It would be a good thing if, all over the country, her Majesty's wishes with regard to such matters prevailed in the daily life of the community.

Occasionally, in such unlikely places as public meetings, something of interest has been mentioned respecting her Majesty. Thus, at a meeting of the London Missionary Society, Mr. Ellis, the famous missionary of Madagascar, mentioned the following interesting circumstance: A draft of a treaty of amity and commerce was sent out from England to Madagascar, and on the margin these words were written: 'Queen Victoria asks, as a personal favour to herself, that the Queen of Madagascar will allow no persecution of the Christians.' A month afterwards the treaty was signed in Madagascar, with the insertion of the following words: 'In accordance with the wish of Queen Victoria, the Queen of Madagascar engages there shall be no persecution of the Christians in Madagascar.'

At a public meeting for opening some church schools at Padiham in Lancashire, Sir James Kay Shuttleworth mentioned that he had been once called in by the Queen and Prince to organise some schools for her for the scattered population of Windsor Forest. The children were not only to be instructed in religious and secular knowledge, but also in making clothes, in cookery, and in gardening. The plan cost the Queen a thousand a year, and the Queen took a strong personal interest in visiting the place, and watching its development. The Prince of Wales was for some time in the habit of examining the scholars. At a meeting held at Cambridge, on behalf of the Army Scripture Readers' Society, the Chaplain of the Forces at Aldershot narrated the following anecdote: 'The incumbent of Osborne had occasion to visit an aged parishioner. Upon his arrival at the house, as he

entered the door where the invalid was, he found, sitting by the bedside, a lady in deep mourning reading the word of God. He was about to retire when the lady remarked, "Pray remain! I should not wish the invalid to lose the comfort which a clergyman might afford." The lady retired, and the clergyman found, lying on the bed, a book with texts of Scripture adapted to the sick; and he found that out of that book portions of Scripture had been read by the lady in black. That lady was the Queen of England.' Many are the instances on record of the visits of her Majesty to the school and cottage, the work-house and the hospital.

Political feeling ran very high in the early years of her Majesty's reign, higher than fortunately has ever been the case since. The Government of the day made a great mistake in not taking the chiefs of the Opposition into their counsel, and so coming with unanimous proposals before the two Houses. This error has been avoided in the settlements made on behalf of members of the Royal Family. Opposition was offered to the incomes to be assigned to the Duchess of Kent and Prince Albert; and there was a question of precedence relating to Prince Albert, which was not settled for many years. Lord Brougham attacked the allowance of 30,000*l.* a year to the Duchess of Kent. He spoke of her as the Queen-Mother. Lord Melbourne corrected by exclaiming, 'Not Queen-Mother, the mother of the Queen,' Lord Brougham: 'I admit my noble friend is right. On a point of this sort I humble myself before my learned friend. I have no courtier-like cultivation. I am rude of speech. The tongue of my noble friend is so well hung, and so well attuned to courtly

airs, that I cannot compete with him for the prize which he is now so eagerly struggling to win. Not being given to *glozening* and *flattery*, I may say that the Duchess of Kent (whether to be called Queen-Mother or Mother of the Queen) is nearly connected with the throne; and a plain man like myself, having no motive but to do my duty, may be permitted to surmise that any additional provision for her may possibly come from the Civil List, which you have so lavishly voted.' Lord Melbourne succeeded in making a very cutting and telling reply. Later, Brougham bitterly attacked Thomas Wild, who had become Lord Truro. He declared that Jonathan Wild had become a courtier, and having married the Queen's cousin laid all his patronage at the Queen's feet. As to her having all the livings in the Chancellor's gift it does not so much signify; but it will never do to let the Court dispose of judicial appointments. Baron Stockmar shall tell the story about the question of precedence: 'I had heard from the Tories that the clause respecting the precedence was certain to be thrown out of the House of Lords. None of my acquaintances whom I could have sent to Wellington or Peel were in town. In my great anxiety I sent my trusted friend Mrs. W. to the Duke of Wellington to represent to him how deeply this question touched the Queen. He received her, listened to her, scolded a little, and gave an uncertain answer, so that this move produced no result. The Queen had taken the defeat respecting the annuity with great composure, but laid all the greater weight upon the success of the question respecting precedence. When Lord Melbourne informed her of the probability of his being de-

feated in the Upper House, and therefore proposed that the matter should be dropped, she could not bring herself to follow this advice. I now went to Melbourne, and found him doubtful and irresolute. I said to him, "For God's sake withdraw your bill, and do not allow yourself to be beaten a second time. This would have the very worst effect possible." He answered: "That I fully believe; but the Queen lays the greatest possible stress upon the matter." I replied: "Be only firm, and prove to her Majesty the evil results that would follow from a second discomfiture." He answered: "Yes; but what is to happen next?" "Settle the matter of precedence," I said, "by an Order in Council, as the Regent did in the case of Prince Leopold." I went home and copied out for Melbourne the words which the Regent had used in 1826 to settle the rank of Prince Leopold, and sent them to him.

We alluded in our last article to the occasion of the installation of the Prince Consort as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. But some years earlier the Queen made a somewhat hasty and informal visit to Cambridge, of which an account has happily been preserved by the wife of the Master of Trinity.

Mrs. Whewell wrote to her mother that the Master of Trinity 'had a letter from Mr. Goulburn saying that when he was at Windsor yesterday, the Queen and Prince Albert expressed a strong desire to pay a visit to the University of Cambridge, and commissioned him to communicate with W. on the subject. Mr. Goulburn had informed them that Trinity claimed on all occasions the honour of receiving her Majesty or her representatives, and that we should feel highly

honoured by her visit. The probable time of the visit would be some day in the week after next. The 25th was finally settled. Imagine my difficulties in finding out first what was necessary on such an extraordinary occasion, what ought to be done, and what on such short notice could be done. However, it ended in my having twenty-one bedrooms and four sitting-rooms prepared for the Queen and Prince and their attendants in the house, besides two kitchens and three sitting-rooms for the different classes of servants. The employment was of great use to me; if I had not been so busy I should have grown very nervous about it.

The morning of Wednesday 25th was dull, but cleared up to the most brilliant sunshine. The clock had scarcely finished striking two when we heard signals that the Queen was come. I ran down to the door to be ready to perform my part, trembling a little as you will easily believe; indeed, the thrilling shouts were enough alone to make one do that. I had not even the comfort of my husband with me, for he had to meet the Queen in the middle of the court as Master of Trinity with the eight Seniors, and deliver to her the keys of the College. She made a reply, of which he could distinguish no words, only the sweet tone of her voice. W. and I received commands to dine with the Queen at eight o'clock; hasty notices were sent out to those whom she would receive in the evening. At dinner, the Queen, and still more the Prince, asked my husband questions about the University and College; to which he gave such full answers, and they seemed to take so much interest in hearing them, that it quite took off the disagreeable effect of a royal categorical con-

versation. Surely if people keep a command over themselves, so as only to follow their lead and continue the subject no longer than it is encouraged, they must like full free answers better than short dry replies, which make conversation a burden. Certainly the Queen and Prince seemed to like it.

'After dinner, in the drawing-room, the Queen asked me if those were curious prints which lay on the table. I had taken care to place some interesting ones there, for the chance of her looking at them. The book she took most notice of was an old book by Sir Edward Stanhope, of coats of arms of our founders and benefactors, which we had got out of the muniment room. I pointed out some of the changes—Henry VIII.'s for instance, with the rouge dragon of Cadwallader, the last of the Britons, for a supporter; James I.'s with the unicorn. When Prince Albert came upstairs she pointed it out to him. He seemed a very good herald, and told me several foreign coats that had quite puzzled me, and also Lord and Lady Braybrooke, who are great heralds.

'Half-past four was fixed for their departure, so I held myself in readiness to perform my last duty in escorting the Queen to the door. Miss Stanley came and said the Queen had sent for me. I came to the green drawing-room and waited there. Soon I was summoned to her in the next room. She gave me a beautiful bracelet, saying she wished to give it to me with her own hands. I hardly knew how to express my gratitude sufficiently, and my surprise was so great it added to my difficulty. She spoke very kindly indeed, and Prince Albert came and said that the only thing he regretted was the shortness of the

visit. They proceeded to the door; the Master was on the stairs. We accompanied them, walking as much backwards as we could. The Prince shook hands heartily with the Master and wished him good-bye. The Queen put on her cloak in the hall, shook my hand—they were in the carriage—the last shouts, and it was all over.'

Mr. Whewell says, 'I do not know that I can tell you much of the Queen's visit that the newspapers have not already told you, for she was in public almost the whole time of her being here. She was very kind in all her expressions to us; told Cordelia that everything in her apartments was "so nice, so comfortable," and at parting gave her a very pretty bracelet. The Prince was very agreeable, intelligent and conversable, seemed much interested with all he saw, and talked a good deal about his German University, Bonn. It appeared from the general management of matters as if his amusement and gratification were the main objects of the expedition.

'At dinner I was opposite the Queen, who talked easily and cheerfully. I had also a good deal of occasion to talk to her, in showing her the lions of Cambridge, which she ran over very rapidly.

'It is no small matter to provide for the Queen's reception even as we did. We had about forty servants of the Queen in the house, besides a dozen men belonging to the stable department who were in the town. The Queen's coachman is reported to have said that he had taken her Majesty to many places, but never to anywhere where she was so well received, or where *the ale was so good*; the latter circumstance, I suppose, in his estimate, set the seal upon our merits.'

A pleasant little story went the round of the University at the time, illustrative of wonderful old Whewell, who raised himself from the position of a sizar to be the Master, and subsequently the benefactor, of his college. When the Queen was his guest at Trinity Lodge, or rather took possession of it in her own right, the morning after her arrival Whewell saluted her with friendly but uncourtly warmth. 'Good-morning, your Majesty. How d'ye do! Hope your Majesty slept well. Fine morning.' The Queen returned a gracious answer—it would not be in her Majesty's nature to do otherwise—but the lords and ladies in attendance were awe-stricken at the frightful breach of etiquette that had commenced, but of which, probably, no one thought less than did the Queen herself. A similar breach of etiquette is related by Lord Campbell of Lord Brougham. Brougham had quarrelled with all the world, and among the rest he was wrathful towards the blameless Prince.

'The Prince thought to appease him by asking him to dine with the Queen. He went and dined; but widened his breach with the Court by leaving the palace immediately after dinner, instead of going with the rest of the gentlemen into the gallery, into which the Queen had retired with the ladies, and where she is in the habit of conversing with her guests. He afterwards tried to make amends by attending the Queen's drawing-room—a condescension he had not before practised since her accession; but here again he was unfortunate (although I really believe he wished to be civil and respectful) by speaking to the Queen *ex mero motu* as he passed her, and telling her that "he was to cross over to Paris in a few days, where he

should see Louis Philippe, and that if her Majesty had any letters or messages for the King of the French, it would give him much pleasure to have the honour of being the bearer of them." Lord Brougham was certainly honoured by no commission from the Queen on that occasion.

We may give one or two statements from foreign ambassadors. The first is M. Guizot's account of his first introduction to the Court of St. James's:

'February the 29th.—At ten minutes past one I received a note from Lord Palmerston telling me that the Queen would receive me that same day at one o'clock. I immediately sent to him to explain the delay and my own innocence. I dressed with all speed, and reached Buckingham Palace a little before two. Lord Palmerston arrived at the same moment. The Queen's orders had been forwarded to him late, they had not been despatched on the instant. Fortunately the Queen had other audiences to give, which occupied her while expecting us. . . . The Queen received me with a gracious manner at once youthful and serious: the dignity of her deportment added to her stature. "I trust, madam," said I on entering, "that your Majesty is aware of my excuse, for of myself I should be inexcusable." She smiled, as if little surprised at the want of punctuality. My audience was short; the King, the Queen, the Royal Family, the intimacy of the King with the Duke of Kent, with surprise that I had never before visited England, formed the topics of conversation. As I was retiring Lord Palmerston, who had remained a moment with the Queen, rejoined me hastily. "There is something more," he said: "I am going to introduce you to Prince

Albert and the Duchess of Kent; you could not otherwise be presented to them but at the next *levée*, on the 6th of March, and it is necessary, on the contrary, that on that day you should already be old friends." The double presentation took place. I was struck with the political intelligence which, though with much reserve, intermingled itself in the conversation of Prince Albert. . . . On Monday, the 30th of March, I was at the Queen's ball. Lord Palmerston, passing with me into a saloon adjoining the gallery of Buckingham Palace, appeared clearly disposed to enter on Eastern matters. I thought it best still to hold off, and leave him engaged with the exclusively English view of the question which was fermenting around him. . . . I saw the commencement of that rare regal happiness which the death of Prince Albert has recently destroyed before its time, if it is permitted to us to assign any particular time as more suitable to death than another. How could I at this moment revert to the assemblies and festivals of that young and happy Royalty, equally charmed with its domestic life and its throne, and respecting which England delighted to indulge in those brilliant hopes of domestic virtue and political wisdom which have been so worthily realised.'

In a recent work, *Monsieur Guizot in Private Life*, by his daughter, Madame de Witt, there are some curious notices of life at Windsor. He said he won twenty pounds in the Ascot sweepstakes, 'Twenty-three sovereigns for me, which will balance the twenty pounds I had to spend in fees to the servants at Windsor Castle.' He thus writes to his son: 'I write to you from Windsor, my dear Guillaume. It certainly is

one of the most delightful and picturesque castles in the world; its exterior is a Gothic fortress of the Middle Ages, the interior is a very elegant and comfortable modern palace. The dining-room is splendid. There were nearly eighty of us, all English except myself. The ceiling is of old sculptured oak. The walls are hung all round with steel armour—helmets, lances, cuirasses and swords. On my left sat the young Queen, whom they tried to assassinate the other day, in gay spirits, talking a great deal, laughing very often and longing to laugh still more; and filling with her gaiety, which contrasted with the already tragical elements in her history, this ancient castle which has witnessed the career of all her predecessors. It was all very grand, very beautiful, very striking.'

We may compare with this French account a brief narrative drawn from an Italian source. Upon the death of their much loved Sovereign, Vittorio Emanuele, the Italian Ministers deputed General della Rocca, a man who had been honoured by the friendship of the late king, to convey the melancholy intelligence to her Majesty the Queen. On arriving at Osborne House, the General and his suite were in a short time received by her Majesty in person, with a gracious condescension which charmed him.

'The true sorrow felt by her Majesty showed itself in voice and manner; she spoke of the great loss the King's death was to the Italian nation at large, spoke with admiration of his soldierly character, calling him her brother of Italy, and then told General della Rocca how she should prize more than ever the beautiful little Sardinian ponies, delicate cream colour, which his late Majesty of Italy had so kindly sent to her,

ordering them to be brought out for the General to see them.'

The General is known to have spoken with much pride and emotion of the Queen's condescension and graceful reception of himself and his aides-de-camp.

Mendelssohn's musical history is identified with England. As a very young man he brought out in this country the overture and incidental music of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Not long before his death he produced, first in Birmingham and afterwards in London, his grand oratorio the *Elijah*. Prince Albert wrote on the book of the oratorio the following words :

'To the noble artist who, though encompassed by the Baal-worship of false art, by his genius and study has succeeded, like another Elijah, in faithfully preserving the worship of true art; once more habituating the ear, amid the giddy whirl of empty frivolous sound, to the fine tones of sympathetic feeling and legitimate harmony; to the great master who, by the tranquil current of his thoughts, reveals to us the gentle whisperings, as well as the mighty strife, of the elements; to him is this written in grateful remembrance by

ALBERT.

'Buckingham Palace.'

We may well continue our quotation from the reminiscences of Felix Mendelssohn. 'It is well known how highly the Queen of England esteemed the German composer, and how graciously she treated him. She received him in her most intimate circle, and caused her pet birds to be carried out of the music-room, to prevent their singing while Mendelssohn was playing. She requested him in the most amiable manner to play some of his own compositions, and herself sang some of

his songs. With an engaging smile she expressed her dissatisfaction with her own performance, appealing playfully to her teacher, Lablache, who, she said, could vouch for her sometimes singing very tolerably; but she felt timid before him, the composer of all those beautiful things. While Mendelssohn was playing, she sat beside him at the piano watching his hands.* We are told, on peculiarly good authority, that on the 8th of May 1847, the day of his departure,† he was summoned once more to Buckingham Palace, where he received a most valuable token of the esteem both of her Majesty and Prince Albert, who had always received Mendelssohn more as an illustrious visitor than as a professional artist.‡

Mendelssohn, in writing to his mother, makes the following remarks: 'Add to this the pretty and most charming Queen Victoria, who looks so youthful, and is so gently courteous and gracious, who speaks such good German, and who knows all my music so well—the four books of 'Songs without Words,' and the Symphony, and the "Hymn of Praise." Yesterday evening I was sent for by the Queen, who was almost alone with Prince Albert, and who seated herself near the piano and made me play to her, first, seven of the "Songs without Words," then the serenade, two impromptus on "Rule Britannia," Lützow's "Wilde Jagd," and "Gaudeamus igitur." The latter was somewhat difficult, but remonstrance was out of the question, and as they gave the themes, of course it was my duty to play them. Then the splendid gallery in Buckingham Palace where

* Polko's *Reminiscences of Mendelssohn*, p. 147.

† Sir Julius Benedict's *Sketch of the Life and Works of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*, 1853.

they drank tea, and where two boars, by Paul Potter, are hanging, and a good many other pictures which pleased me well.*

There are some references to the Queen in the *Life of Patrick Fraser Tytler*, the Scottish historian, by Dr. Burgon, the Dean of Chichester. Tytler was intensely loyal. It was part of his own religion, and the religion which he taught his children. Captain Basil Hall, the well-known traveller, saw him presented at court. 'I wish you could have seen your brother when he knelt to kiss the Queen's hand.' The historian had for a time in his possession a collection of miniatures belonging to the Queen, which he was endeavouring to authenticate. This led to frequent messages from the palace. It was almost too much for his old serving-man, when a mounted messenger in royal livery would arrive on an errand from the palace, especially when some engravings were brought home of the Princess Royal, and the Prince of Wales, with the Queen's autograph. The Queen also commanded him to examine a singular relic in her Majesty's possession, known as the Darnley jewel, and make a report upon it. 'His notes he transmitted in writing to the palace, where they gave so much satisfaction that he received her Majesty's orders to cause a few copies to be printed for her Majesty's use, and by the end of April twenty-five elegant litho quarto volumes were the result. One of these copies was afterwards presented to himself.' He was invited to dine at Windsor Castle, and received her Majesty's commands to stay another day. He wrote down a full account of the events of that memorable

time, from which we make some excerpts. He relates how he went to prayers, which her Majesty, the Prince, and all the servants of the household attended, at nine.

'Soon after luncheon a message came from Mr. Murray to say that I must meet him immediately, to go and see the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal, who were coming into the corridor with the Queen. . . . Her Majesty bowed most graciously, having the Prince of Wales in her hand, trotting on, and looking happy and merry. When the Queen came to where I was, and on my bowing, and looking, and looking very delightedly, which I could not help doing, at the little Prince and her, she bowed, and said to the little boy, "Make a bow, sir." When the Queen said this, the Duke of Cambridge and the rest stood still, and the little Prince, walking straight up to me, made a bow, smiling all the time, and holding out his hand, which I immediately took, and, bowing low, kissed it. The Queen seemed much pleased, and smiling affectionately at the gracious way in which the little Prince deported himself. All then passed through the corridor, and after an interval of a quarter of an hour Prince Albert, followed by a servant, bearing two boxes, and having himself a large morocco box, came up to where I was, and told me he had brought the miniatures to show me of which he had spoken last night. Then, in the sweetest possible way, he opened his treasures, and employed more than half an hour in showing me the beautiful ancient miniatures of Holbein, Oliver, Cooper, and others; most exquisite things, embracing a series of original portraits of the kings, queens, princesses, and eminent men of England, and the Continent also, from the time of Henry VII.

* Lady Wallace's translation of Mendelssohn's Letters.

to the reign of George III. . . . At dinner all went on very happily, without any stiffness. . . . There was nobody but a lady and Prince Hohenlohe between me and the Queen. When we came into the drawing-room her Majesty singled me out after a little time, and entered into conversation about the miniatures. I expressed my high admiration of them, and of their great historical value, and praised the Prince for the ardour and knowledge he had shown in bringing them together, and rescuing them from neglect. Her Majesty seemed pleased, and questioned me about the portraits of Bothwell. I expressed the doubts I had stated to the Prince, as to there being any authentic picture in existence, but added, that I would make myself master of the fact immediately on my return, which she seemed to like.

We now give from Mr. Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens** an authentic account of her Majesty's acquaintance with the greatest of modern novelists.

'It had been hoped to obtain her Majesty's name for the Jerrold performances in 1857, but, being a public effort in behalf of an individual, assent would have involved "either perpetual compliance or the giving of perpetual offence." Her Majesty, however, then sent, through Colonel Phipps, a request to Dickens that he would select a room in the Palace, do what he would with it, and let her see the play there. I said to Colonel Phipps thereupon' (21st of June 1857) 'that the idea was not quite new to me; that I did not feel easy as to the social position of my daughters, &c., at a Court under those circumstances; and that I would beg her Majesty to excuse me if any other way of her seeing the play could

be devised. To this Phipps said he had not thought of the objection, but had not the slightest doubt I was right. I then proposed that the Queen should come to the Gallery of Illustration a week before the subscription night, and should have the room entirely at her own disposal, and should invite her own company. This, with the good sense that seems to accompany her good nature on all occasions, she resolved within a few hours to do.' The effect of the performances was a great gratification. 'My gracious sovereign' (5th of July 1857) 'was so pleased that she sent round begging me to go and see her, and accept her thanks. I replied that I was in my farce dress, and must beg to be excused. Whereupon she sent again, saying that the dress "would not be so ridiculous as 'that,'" and repeating the request. I sent my duty in reply, but again hoped her Majesty would have the kindness to excuse myself presenting myself in a costume and appearance that was not my own. I was mighty glad to think, when I woke this morning, that I had carried the point.'

The opportunity of presenting himself in his own costume did not arrive till the year of his death, another effort meanwhile made having proved also unsuccessful. 'I was put into a state of much perplexity on Sunday' (30th of March 1858). 'I don't know who had spoken to my informant, but it seems that the Queen is bent upon hearing the *Carol* read, and has expressed her desire to bring it about without offence, and hesitating about the manner of it, in consequence of my having begged to be excused from going to her when she sent for me after the *Frozen Deep*. I parried the thing as well as I

could, but being asked to be prepared with a considerate and obliging answer, as it was known the request would be preferred, I said, "Well, I supposed Colonel Phipps would speak to me about it, and if it were he who did so I should assure him of my desire to meet any wish of her Majesty's, and should express my hope that she would indulge me by making one of some audience or other—for I thought an audience necessary to the effect." Thus it stands; but it bothers me."

"The difficulty was not surmounted, but her Majesty's continued interest in the *Carol* was shown by her purchase of a copy of it, with Dickens's autograph, at Thackeray's sale; and at last there came, in the year of his death, the interview with the author, whose popularity dated from her accession, whose books had entertained larger numbers of her subjects than those of any other contemporary writer, and whose genius will be counted among the glories of her reign. Accident led to it. Dickens had brought with him from America some large and striking photographs of the battle-fields of the civil war, which the Queen, having heard of them through Mr. Helps, expressed a wish to look at. Dickens sent them at once; and went afterwards to Buckingham Palace with Mr. Helps, at her Majesty's request, that she might see and thank him in person.

"It was in the middle of March, not April. "Come now, sir, this is an interesting matter, do favour us with it," was the cry of Johnson's friends, after the conversation with George III.; and again and again the story was told to listeners ready to make marvels of its commonplaces. But the romance even of the eighteenth century in such a matter is clean

gone out of the nineteenth. Suffice it that the Queen's kindness left a strong impression on Dickens. Upon her Majesty's regret not to have heard his readings, Dickens intimated that they had become now a thing of the past, while he acknowledged gratefully her Majesty's compliment in regard to them. She spoke to him of the impression made upon her by his acting in the *Frozen Deep*; and on his stating in reply to her inquiry, that the little play had not been very successful on the public stage, said this did not surprise her, since it no longer had the advantage of his performance in it. Then arose a mention of some alleged discourtesy shown to Prince Arthur in New York; and he begged her Majesty not to confound the true Americans of that city with the Fenian portion of its Irish population, on which she made the quiet comment that she was convinced the people about the Prince had made too much of the affair. He related to her the story of President Lincoln's dream the night before his murder. She asked him to give her his writings, and could she have them that afternoon? but he begged to be allowed to send a bound copy. Her Majesty then took from a table her own book on the Highlands, with an autograph inscription 'to Charles Dickens,' and saying that the 'humblest' of writers would be ashamed to offer it to 'one of the greatest,' but that Mr. Helps, being asked to give it, had remarked that it would be valued most from herself, closed the interview by placing it in his hands. "Sir," said Johnson, "they may say what they like of the young king, but Louis XIV. could not have shown a more refined courtliness;" and Dickens was not dis-

posed to say less of the old King's grand-daughter. That the grateful impression sufficed to carry him into new ways, I had immediate proof, coupled with information of the still surviving strength of old memories. "As my sovereign desires" (26th of March 1870) "that I should attend the next *levée*, don't faint with amazement if you see my name in that unwonted connection. I have scrupulously kept myself free for the 2d of April, in case you should be accessible." The name appeared at the *levée* accordingly; his daughter was at the drawing-room that followed, and Lady Houghton writes to me: "I never saw Mr. Dickens more agreeable than at a dinner at our house about a fortnight before his death, when he met the King of the Belgians and the Prince of Wales at the special desire of the latter." Up to nearly the hour of dinner it was doubtful if he could go. He was suffering from the distress in his foot; and on arrival at the house, being unable to ascend the stairs, had to be assisted at once into the dining-room.*

The political relations of her Majesty to the different parties in the State and her great political leaders are full of interest. We venture to affirm that the Queen has always avoided a party bias, and so, unlike so many sovereigns, has never been a political partisan. She has always been a careful student of the political constitution of the country, and we may almost venture to say, also, a student of international law. Prince Albert systematically studied English constitutional law under the guidance of the best books and teachers, and the Queen was always the companion of his reading and of his thoughts. Being human, she must of course

have had her personal predilections, but these have never interfered with perfect fairness. Her Majesty has always kept her mind singularly open to fresh impressions; and statesmen for whom she is credited with having entertained some measure of aversion have been reckoned among her most faithful counsellors and warmest personal friends. This was the case with the eminent Conservative statesmen, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Beaconsfield. It was supposed that the Queen, when she first came to the throne, was a thorough Whig, and for years she was surrounded by Whigs. But the matter with her Majesty was not a political, but a personal, question. She naturally clung to the friends of her youth. The favour of the youthful sovereign was a prize for which all within the political lists would compete. Lord Brougham, unjustly treated by his party, and politically ostracised by them, entertained hopes that somehow, by the new political revolution, something might turn up for him. Lord Brougham supposed that the Princess Victoria, having necessarily heard so much of him, might have formed as high an opinion of him as the Princess Charlotte had done, and, like that discerning member of the house of Brunswick, might wish to have him for her chief adviser.* The Queen, however, sent for the man who had shown himself Brougham's bitterest foe, and for whom Brougham entertained the deepest hostility. The Queen sent for Melbourne, and for years he continued to exercise all the prerogatives of the Crown in her name, subject only to the control of Parliament. She had a sort of filial affection and reverence for

* Campbell's *Lives of Brougham and Lyndhurst*.

him, and she showed that she was pleased with his captivating manners and with the principles of government with which he wished to imbue her. Brougham felt that for the present all possibility of his being in office was gone.' At this time the Tories not unnaturally became very hostile to the Court. Macaulay, as soon as he got a seat in Parliament after his return from India, declared that he had lived to see a race of disloyal Tories. In the Buckingham Memoirs we find a curious passage in a letter from the Marquis of Londonderry: 'I hear Melbourne says, in all his numerous conversations with the Queen, he never has been able to extract an opinion in what quarter or where she has a predilection. This he has stated with great surprise. It appears to me quite evident, from all I hear in town, that Melbourne knew how to please a woman much better than Peel.*' It must be said, however, that Lord Melbourne, with all his faults, was a thoroughly loyal and attached servant of the Queen. He gave her faithful counsel. Although he probably devised the famous letter about the Ladies of the Bedchamber, which kept him in office in spite of an adverse majority, and prevented Sir Robert from reaping the fruits of a political triumph, yet he was too worthy a man to suffer the Queen's name to be associated with a political faction. M. Guizot, a most careful and accurate observer, writes: 'The Tories returned to Court when the Queen began again to invite them. Lord Melbourne advised the step with liberal moderation, particularly recommending her to pay attention to Sir Robert Peel, "the leader of a powerful party," he

said, "and, moreover, a most able and honourable man, with whom the Queen ought to be on good terms." As a matter of fact, the Queen became on exceedingly good terms with Sir Robert. We have heard the narrative, which we believe to be authentic, that on one occasion, at Buckingham Palace, Sir Robert Peel took up the Prince of Wales, then a child, in his arms, and expounded to the Queen the historic Tory doctrine of loyalty to the Crown, and said that the fate and fortunes of the young Prince were dearer to none than to the great Conservative party, who were especially pledged to the support of the Throne. On one occasion her Majesty honoured the Conservative Premier with a visit to Tamworth.

At the time of the repeal of the Corn Laws a great deal of unusual trouble and difficulty devolved upon her Majesty. When Sir Robert Peel changed his opinions on the subject of Free-trade, he thought it his duty to proffer his resignation. 'In the course of the interviews with her Majesty which took place after my arrival at Osborne, I trust that I satisfied the Queen that I was influenced by considerations of the public interest, and not by fear of responsibility or of reproach, in humbly tendering my resignation of office. Her Majesty was pleased to accept it with marks of confidence and approbation, which, however gratifying, made it a very painful act to replace in her Majesty's hands the trust she had confided in me. . . . The generous support which I had uniformly received from her Majesty, and all that passed on the occasion of my retirement, made an impression on my heart which can never be effaced.' Various explanations passed on the subject of a change of Ministry. Sir

* *Courts and Cabinets of William IV. and Victoria*, vol. ii, p. 288.

Robert Peel mentions in his *Memoir* that when he thus resigned, the Queen mentioned to him her wish that the Duke of Wellington should retain the command of the army. He promised the Queen that he would do all he could to induce the Duke to stay, as his keeping on would be a great source of strength to any Government. The Queen also wished that Lord Liverpool, in whom she had very great and deserved confidence, should retain the appointment of Lord Steward. We now go on with Sir Robert's narrative.* 'I repaired to Windsor Castle at the time appointed. On entering the room, her Majesty said to me very graciously, "So far from taking leave of you, Sir Robert, I must require you to withdraw your resignation, and to remain in my service." In the language of *Punch's* famous cartoon, Lord John 'was not strong enough for the place.' 'I returned from Windsor Castle to London,' writes Sir Robert, 'on the evening of the 20th of December 1845, having resumed all the functions of the First Minister of the Crown.' He immediately called together a meeting of his party: 'A letter which I addressed to her Majesty immediately after the meeting gives an account of what passed at it.' Sir Robert Peel's return to power was not of long duration, as he was thrown out of office by the adverse majority of Whigs and Protectionists, they rejecting by 78 his Irish Protection of Life (better known as the Coercion) Bill. Ireland, he had said prophetically, was always his great difficulty. How deeply Sir Robert in his heart of hearts clung to power may be seen in a letter of his to the Princess Lieven, written soon after that interview with the

Queen which we have related: 'It is a strange dream,' he wrote to the Princess. 'I feel like a man restored to life after his funeral sermon has been preached, highly gratified by such condolences on his death as I have received from the King and our valued friend, M. Guizot.' Had Sir Robert's life been spared, it might have been expected that he would again have reconstructed the Tory party. His very last speech, just before his fatal accident, was in this direction. His sudden death was most acutely felt by her Majesty. She mourned for him as if for a father, and shut herself up for some days, deploring the loss which she had sustained.

Sometimes in the official correspondence of Ministers there are references to Royalty. Lord Palmerston has a few interesting notes about the Queen. On the memorable 20th of June he writes: 'The Queen went through her task to-day with great dignity and self-possession. One saw she felt much inward emotion, but it was fully controlled. Her articulation was peculiarly good.' A month afterwards came the addresses and the Foreign Ministers: 'Nothing could be better than her manner of receiving them; it was easy and dignified, and gracious.' There is a somewhat singular, but very interesting, letter in the Palmerston correspondence, from which it may safely be inferred that the Queen had expressed a playful wish that she could speak in the House of Commons on a subject that was full of interest to her.* Lord Palmerston writes: 'Piccadilly, 18th July 1857.—Viscount Palmerston presents his humble duties to your Majesty, and has had the honour to receive your

* *Life and Correspondence of Lord Palmerston*, by Evelyn Ashley, M. P., vol. ii. p. 348.

* *Peel Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 247.

Majesty's communication of yesterday, stating what your Majesty would have said if your Majesty had been in the House of Commons. Viscount Palmerston may, perhaps, be permitted to take the liberty of saying that it is fortunate for those from whose opinions your Majesty differs, that your Majesty is not in the House of Commons; for they would have had to encounter a formidable antagonist in argument; although, on the other hand, those whose opinions your Majesty approves would have had the support of a powerful ally in debate.

It is a proof of her Majesty's unceasing interest in foreign affairs that Mr. Evelyn Ashley goes on to state that this letter 'drew another and a more detailed communication from the Queen, in which the military measures to be adopted were urged at greater length. The Cabinet were not backward in seconding the wishes of the Crown.' There is no doubt, as Mr. Ashley puts it, that the Queen had desired the removal of Lord Palmerston from the Foreign Office, and had wished to make him Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland instead. The late Lord Lansdowne, in writing to Lord Palmerston, uses the terms, 'knowing as I long have known the extent of susceptibility which prevailed in that quarter on these matters, and greatly lamented, and which I have unsuccessfully laboured to combat.' These facts made it more gracious on the part of her Majesty to offer Lord Palmerston, in 1857, the vacant and most honourable office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. It was not unpleasing to Lord Palmerston that, as Lord Warden, he was entitled to a salute of nineteen guns, whereas as Prime Minister he was not entitled to any salute at all.

When Palmerston went down to Glasgow to be installed an amusing occurrence happened, of which we find mention. There was a club called the Gaisters, with power to add to their number, at Glasgow; and, as the club happened at this time to be entertaining Admiral Sir James Hope, they took the opportunity of inviting Lord Palmerston to become a 'Gaiter.' Mr. Evelyn Ashley then tells the following amusing story:

'It had devolved upon Dr. Norman McLeod, one of the Queen's chaplains, and also chaplain to the club, to propose that the new member should be received. Those who remember his rich vein of humour, and the solemn fun which he kept ready for appropriate occasions, can picture for themselves the manner in which he spoke as follows: "That he had been lately staying at Balmoral; that he had taken the opportunity of informing her Majesty that it was contemplated by the gentlemen he now had the honour of addressing to make Lord Palmerston a 'Gaiter,' and that it was only due to her Majesty that, before so grave a step was taken, she should be asked for her gracious permission. That her Majesty had, after much consideration, replied that although, no doubt, it was a dangerous thing for any subject to be both Prime Minister and a 'Gaiter,' still, considering Lord Palmerston's great services, and, above all, his age and experience, which would preserve him from any abuse of the power conferred upon him, she would, in his favour, waive her objections." The party had broken up laughing, when it was discovered that a *Times* reporter had been present the whole time, and it was feared that he might, perhaps, be a Scotchman,

who had neither undergone operation by a surgeon nor milder treatment by a "Gaiter" in order to admit the joke. Dr. M'Leod had really just come from Balmoral, and, in panic terror lest all he had said might appear in the next day's *Times*, he rushed from the room, called a cab, and hurried to the railway in time to catch the reporter before his parcel left. No doubt the precaution was unnecessary, but the witty chaplain's agony of mind was none the less diverting.

But probably of all statesmen with whom her Majesty has been thrown into intimate relation none has received a greater degree of honour and favour than Benjamin Disraeli, the late Earl of Beaconsfield. Disraeli had much to contend against. For many years he was not acceptable to the bulk of the great Conservative party, who, for want of a better leader, were content to accept his guidance. How well he caricatured the cry of the Tadpoles and Tapers when her Majesty came to the throne—"Our young Queen and our old institutions!" It is said that the Queen was very far from being impressed originally in favour of Mr. Disraeli. Afterwards she did ample justice to the rare and radiant qualities of the man. It was the great distinction of Disraeli that he made a duke, an archbishop, and an Empress. His own ambition was satisfied in being a belted earl and a Knight of the Garter. The Queen accorded him honours which sovereigns have rarely awarded to subjects. She watched over his health, she visited him at his house, she has paid signal honours to his memory. The memorial which she has placed to his memory in Hughenden Church bears an inscription, written by the Queen herself: 'To the dear

and honoured memory of Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield. This memorial is placed by his grateful and affectionate Sovereign and friend, Victoria R. I. "Kings love him that speaketh right" (Proverbs xvi. 13).' Probably some of the best personal memorials of the Queen are among the private papers of Lord Beaconsfield.

The late Miss Wynn was extremely intimate with the late Dean Stanley, and from Dr. Stanley she derived some deeply interesting facts relating to her Majesty. It may be presumed that they are authentic, as they passed unchallenged while the Dean was living.

'He' (Dr. Stanley) 'saw a great deal of Princess Hohenlohe, the Queen's half-sister, whom he describes as charming. She told him that the Prince was not only certain that he should die early, but that he wished to do so. And this wish arose principally from the very high ideal he had always before him, and his feelings of his own shortcomings, and of the difficulties that surrounded him. He would say, "Though I am quite happy here, I look forward to the time when God will call me, where I can serve Him better, and without the limitations which encompass me here." He believed that he was going to more earnest and more devoted work than he could carry on whilst in the body. He was always trying to prepare the Queen for his going first. The Princess says the Queen went out every morning to look at the cows, and go round the farm, because he had been used to do so; that her only comfort was that his spirit was close to her, which he had also assured her would be the case. Lady Augusta Bruce writes out whatever strikes her as being likely to soothe the Queen's grief; and sometimes the

least expected bits have the most effect."

We have admitted in these pages some mention of other members of the Royal Family. In a book not very generally read—a volume of sermons by Dean Stanley—we find in the appendix an account of the remarkable incidents in the visit of the Prince of Wales to Palestine. An account of the events at Hebron also appeared in the *Times*, and a comparison of the two leaves the fact undoubted that Dean Stanley also wrote the account in the *Times*, to which it is known that he was an occasional contributor.

'The Mosque of Hebron is, of all the Holy Places in Palestine, the one which has excited in modern times the keenest curiosity, and which, at the same time, rests on the best historical evidence. The effort made by the Prince of Wales in his journey of 1862 gave to his eastern pilgrimage a peculiar value, such as has been attached to the visit of no other European Prince to the Holy Land. The negotiations devolved on General Bruce, the governor of the Prince of Wales . . . Sûrûya Pasha offered every other civility or honour that could be paid. The General took his position on the ground that, since the opening of the other Holy Places, this was the one honour left for the Turkish Government to award on the rare occasion of a visit of the Prince of Wales. . . . The shrine of Sarah we were requested not to enter, as being that of a woman. A pall lay over it. The shrine of Abraham, after a momentary hesitation, was thrown open. The guardians groaned aloud. But their Chief turned to us with the remark, "The princes of any other nation should have passed

over my dead body sooner than enter; but to the eldest son of the Queen of England we are willing to accord even this privilege." He stepped in before us, and offered an ejaculatory prayer to the dead patriarch, "O friend of God, forgive this intrusion." We then entered. The chamber is cased in marble. . . . But on requesting to see the tomb of Isaac, we were entreated not to enter; and on asking, with some surprise, why an objection which had been conceded for Abraham should be raised in the case of his far less eminent son, were answered, that the difference lay in the characters of the two patriarchs—"Abraham was full of loving-kindness; he had withstood even the resolution of God against Sodom and Gomorrah; he was goodness itself, and would overlook any affront. But Isaac was proverbially jealous, and it was exceedingly dangerous to exasperate him."

'Our descent to the city of Damascus was accompanied by the crowd and tumult which always greeted the Prince's arrival. But it is worth noticing, as a proof of the deeply-seated irritation of the Mussulman population of Damascus against the Powers of Christendom, that, here alone of all the Eastern cities through which he passed, was there any indication of a wish to withhold the respect due to his rank and position. Along the streets and bazaars, many a Mussulman remained sullen and immovable on his seat, instead of rising to salute the long cavalcade as it approached. A message from the Pasha afterwards corrected this unusual sign of aversion to the appearance of a Christian Prince. But the natural feeling of the population was not to be mistaken. . . . Close by our en-

* *Memorials of C. W. Wynn*, p. 295.

campment stood the large deserted house, it might almost be called castle, of the Maronite chief, Sheykh Joseph, who, in consequence of some complications arising out of the late disturbances, had been banished to Constantinople. It was touching to see the excitement and distress of the villagers over the loss of their chief. Wherever we went—especially whenever the Prince appeared—there was the same cry amongst the men, the same beating of breasts and wailing amongst the women, "Restore us our Bey! O, restore us our Bey!" It was after a walk through the village—in which we visited several of the churches and cottages in the place—that we found the stairs and corridors of the castle lined with a crowd of eager applicants, "sick people taken with divers diseases," who, hearing that there was a medical man in the party, had thronged round him, "beseeching him that he would heal them." . . . It was an affecting scene: our kind doctor was distressed to find how many cases there were which, with proper medical appliances, might have been cured; and, on returning to the ship, by the Prince's desire a store of medicines were sent back, with Arabic labels directing how, and for what purpose, they should be used.

Some interesting anecdotes gleaned from literary by-ways may be given about the Princess Royal. With much diffidence she had sent in a picture to the Art-Bazaar in aid of the funds for the widows and orphans of those who fell in the Crimean war. 'The Princess had put a very modest sum on her work, to dispose of it privately for a small sum, which she wished to enter as her subscription. The first offer, made immediately as the

doors of the exhibition were opened, was eighty guineas, followed by another of a hundred guineas. The names were entered in the book, it having been previously arranged that the highest offer up to a certain day at noon was to obtain the picture. At the appointed time, two hundred guineas had been offered by a person who was present to hear the clock strike twelve. Just before the hour he said, "Well, I am surprised that there is not more appreciation of so fine a work of art; and that it may not be said that it sold for two hundred guineas, I offer two hundred and fifty," for which sum he wrote a cheque as the clock struck twelve. The result of the sale surprised the Princess, who had too much good sense, however, to be elated by any foolish vanity, while rejoicing in the success of her effort for the treasury fund.' Here is an anecdote of the Princess when she first went to her home at Berlin: 'A Prussian Princess, for instance, is not allowed by her mistress of the robe to take up a chair, and, after having carried it through the whole breadth of the room, to put it down in another corner. It was while committing such an act that Princess Victoria was lately caught by Countess Perponcher. The venerable lady remonstrated with a considerable degree of earnestness. "I'll tell you what," replied, nothing daunted, the royal heroine of this story—"I'll tell you what, my dear Countess: you are probably aware of the fact of my mother being the Queen of England!" The Countess bowed in assent. "Well," resumed the bold Princess, "then I must reveal to you another fact; her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland has not once, but very often, so far forgotten herself as to take up a chair. I

speak from personal observation, I can assure you. Nay, if I am not greatly deceived, I noticed one day my mother carrying a chair in each hand, in order to set them for her children. Do you really think that my dignity forbids anything which is frequently done by the Queen of England?" The Countess bowed again and retired, perhaps not without a little astonishment at the biographical information she had heard. However, she knew her office, and resolved to prove not less staunch to her duties than the Princess to her principles.

We take from an old periodical an anonymous account of an interesting visit to the Castle of Rosenau.*

'We heard the Queen had only just left the Palace of Rosenau, which stands a little way outside the town. Rosenau is an old manor-house, and small for the number of guests it had lately accommodated. 'Twas the birth-place of Prince Albert, and soon after her marriage the Queen and Prince spent a few happy days here together. On the same floor was the room where Prince Albert first saw the light; it was small, and a large bed usurped a lion's share of it. There had been a good many damask curtains hanging about it; but when the Queen chose this as her own apartment, she caused them to be removed, and replaced by others of lighter texture. The little Prince Leopold seemed to have made himself very popular, and he often used to go down to the lodge to play with a favourite dog, which he afterwards carried off with him to England. As we were leaving, the wife of the "Castellan" begged us to come and see the gifts which her Majesty had presented, on her departure, to

* *Churchman's Family Magazine*, 1865.

herself and her husband. The presents were jewelry—I think a brooch and a ring—and they seemed to be extremely appreciated. . . . A gentleman whom we met related to us how that one of his friends was once walking in the streets of Berlin, and he met the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia also on foot, and on their way to the picture-gallery. The Princess invited him, in the most friendly manner, to accompany them there, and astonished him by her knowledge of the schools of painting, the great masters, and the merits or demerits of the various pictures. . . . Rosenau is not the only place in the Coburg territories where our Queen has been received; she spent some time, a few years ago, at Rheinardsbrunn, not far from Gotha. The accommodation at Rheinardsbrunn is, however, scanty, and as the English party and their suite were many in number, the Duke hired a rustic hotel, called the Swiss House, in the neighbouring village, for his own use and those of his guests whom the palace could not contain. Prince and Princess Louis of Hesse occupied a sort of gardener's cottage at the bottom of the garden of the Swiss House. The Princess left her name and titles, written in a clear fine handwriting, in the hotel-book. They seemed to have been rather a jolly party, by all accounts, living in a style which, to those of the number who had been brought up in English palaces, must have appeared very rustic. The long low dining-room the Duke sur-named his skittle-alley—not a bad appellation, considering its shape and bareness of furniture.

'One day, while dinner was being served, the pigs got loose into the garden, and ran grunting about; whereupon the Duke called out

to the Prince of Wales, "There are the German pigs come to greet your arrival to the Fatherland." While the Swiss Hotel was still an hotel for the public, the Prince of Wales in the course of a walk required a light for his cigar, and made his way into the kitchen to ask for one. Not knowing who he was, the cook treated him rather cavalierly, and let him wait her convenience. Her horror and amazement may be imagined, on hearing afterwards that the young pedestrian was heir to the English throne. Quite a modern edition of King Alfred and the cakes.'

The present writer has frequently, in the course of his travels, been, so to speak, on the track of her Majesty. Although his experiences are not beyond those of a great many tourists, yet in their combination they afford some features of interest. He will first speak of nearer experiences before referring to those in foreign countries. He remembers very well a time when he was a student at the Bodleian Library. By an ill chance he was absent on a certain day from his customary cell. 'You missed something yesterday,' said a friend on the following morning. 'The Queen came privately from Windsor to Oxford to see the Prince of Wales, who was then in residence, and she passed down this very gallery of the Bodleian.' The popular progresses of the Queen are historical, as much so as those of great Elizabeth herself; but we imagine that a very amusing and interesting history of her *incognito* journeys might also be written. 'Ah,' said the well-known old gardener at Dropmore to me one day, 'we had the Queen over here last week, and she was comparing our wall-fruit with that of Frogmore.' It was

the privilege of the writer at one time, in the days of the late Mr. Woodward, to have an *entrée* to his regal library at Windsor. The royal children have often been to that library to examine curious and rare books. It was very interesting to examine some presentation copies of famous books presented by some of the greatest writers of the age. I especially remember a copy of one of Mr. Tennyson's works thus presented. At this time a classified collection was being made of an immense number of engravings of every kind which had been brought together by the Prince Consort. We were told of her Majesty's personal messages that had been sent to insure the care and completeness of the collection. I was permitted to see the Castle very thoroughly, but felt little wonder that much care had to be taken against the devastations of visitors in general. They had entirely ruined a grotto which Prince Albert had placed in the grounds, and chipped off pieces of wood from the throne itself in St. George's Hall.

On one occasion I was in the parish church of Newport with one who had accompanied the Queen thither a few days before. Her Majesty had just caused a memorial to be placed to the Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of Charles the First. The bars of the prison-house were sculptured as broken, emblematic of the liberation by merciful death. The Queen, we were told, had not said a word, but appeared absorbed in her thoughts, evoked by the contemplation of the subject. 'Perhaps,' said a friend, 'there is not a single person in the whole island who has not profited, directly or indirectly, by her Majesty's residence at Osborne.' I heard of various amusing attempts made

by people to obtain a view of the house and the private grounds. Persons had actually disguised themselves as tradesmen going to the house for orders. One of the most interesting circumstances I know of was a visit paid by her Majesty to the Poet Laureate at Freshwater. Of course I made the customary pilgrimage to Balmoral. There was no chance, however, of seeing her Majesty at Crathie Church. There had been such a mob of tourists that her Majesty had, for a time, given up attendance at Crathie Church, and the service was performed in the drawing-room of Balmoral. It was necessary indeed to guard her Majesty very carefully against the incursions of the British tourist. As the splendid carriages of some of the neighbouring nobility came up they were stopped and interrogated. There were a certain number of detectives in plain clothes about the neighbourhood. Everything we saw and heard spoke of order, comfort, and improvement. The Queen had lately made large purchases of land from Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld. There were fresh paths in the woods, new plantations on the hillsides, new bridges, new habitations. The Queen would herself enter the little shops of Braemar to make purchases, and go to the sick-beds of her poor. Every person in her household seemed thought of by her, while telegraph, post, and messengers connected the remote Highland home with mighty interests all over the world.

Making a visit to Treport once, I strolled onward to the park and château of Eu. From the height of the wonderful old church of St. Jacques, in the picturesque old fishing-town, I commanded the prospect far and wide. Eu was the seat of the Penthievre, and Louis

Philippe inherited it from his mother, a daughter of the Duc de Penthievre. It is a low red-brick building, with high tent-shaped roof of slate, built on the site of the castle where William the Conqueror was visited by Harold of Windsor. Louis Philippe enlarged the place, and adorned it with some eleven hundred pictures. What changes the edifice has seen since it was visited by our Queen in 1843! Within less than ten years the Orleanist dynasty had disappeared, and as much as could be of the furniture and pictures were hurried off to England. In 1874 the Comte de Paris resumed possession, and the place has undergone restoration from M. Viollet le Duc. A terrace overlooks the Bresle on its way to the sea; there is a kind of wilderness with arcaded walks of elms, and I happened to be there on one of the days on which a large domain is open to the public. But I take up one of M. Guizot's works, which gives an account of the visit of Queen Victoria:

'I received a call from Lord Cowley to inform me that Queen Victoria was on the point of paying a visit to the King at the Château d'Eu, and that Lord Aberdeen would accompany her. He had only as yet received the information by a letter from Mr. Henry Greville, but he considered the fact as certain. I instantly despatched a courier to the King, who replied on the following day, the 26th of August: "Yes, my dear minister (I begin like Racine's Agamemnon), I have every reason to believe that we are about to receive at Eu a royal visit from Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. She has intrusted my sons, who arrived this morning, with all her messages. She only requires us to keep till the 30th of August a secret which is no longer one; be-

cause, she says, the execution of this project might be impeded by publicity. . . . The Queen intends to be at Brighton on Monday, to embark there to visit some English ports in the Channel, thence to proceed to Trepport. . . . We must have plate and china. All here have lost their heads. The rooms are another embarrassment. Fortunately Pickham has a dozen wooden huts, intended for Algiers, which I shall set up in the garden of the church, and furnish as well as we can. . . . It is settled that Lord Aberdeen comes with her. This seems to indicate to us the invitation of Lord Cowley. Have the goodness to render it on my part to Lord and Lady Cowley, and Miss Wellesley. As to yourself, my dear minister, you will come when you please, but I advise you not to let it be later than Thursday, that we may have time to understand each other thoroughly. . . . *You will have to excuse the accommodation, which will be very indifferent. Never mind; all will go on excellently well. Good-night, my dear minister.*" At a quarter-past five, cannon announced that the Queen was in sight. We drew us alongside the yacht Victoria and Albert. We mounted the deck. The King and Queen were mutually affected. He embraced her. She said, "I am delighted to see you again *here*." She descended with Prince Albert into the King's barge. . . . The Queen, as she placed her foot on shore, had the brightest expression of countenance I have ever looked upon—a mixture of emotions, a degree of surprise, and, above all, the most animated pleasure in this reception. There was much shaking of hands in the royal tent. . . . On Sunday, the 3d of September, after Queen Victoria had been present at the

English service in a hall of the château arranged for that purpose, the King took her in a large *char-à-banc*, entirely filled by the Royal Family, to the summit of a tableland which afforded an admirable view of sea and forest. The weather was beautiful, but the road bad, narrow, and full of stones and ruts. The Queen of England laughed, and amused herself at the idea of being thus jolted along in royal French company, in a sort of carriage quite new to her, and drawn by six splendid dapple-gray Norman horses, driven gaily by two postillions, with their sounding bells and brilliant uniform. . . . Lord Aberdeen and I talked, as we drove along, a little of all things. He told me that for two months the Queen had projected this voyage, and had spoken of it to Sir Robert Peel and himself; that they had strongly approved of it, requesting her to say nothing on the subject until the rising of Parliament, to avoid the questions, remarks, and perhaps censures of the Opposition. "The Queen," added Lord Aberdeen, "would not go to Paris; she wished to pay a visit to the King and Royal Family, not to divert herself." . . . The visit ended with all the personal satisfaction and political effect which could have been anticipated and hoped. Queen Victoria departed on Thursday, the 9th of September, for her kingdom, leaving between the two royal families, and the ministers of the two States, the seeds of sincere confidence and rare friendship.'

It is related in a French memoir that when the Queen was leaving Eu a heavy shower of rain fell, and the ground was very damp. There was a space to be traversed between the carriage and the royal yacht. All the French courtiers took off their

cloaks and overcoats, and speedily spread a carpet for her Majesty to walk on dryshod.* A precisely similar occurrence is related in the life of Dr. Whewell, of some noblemen and gentlemen doing the same thing when the Queen visited the chapel of Trinity College. It is curious that Sir Walter Raleigh's famous episode of gallantry should thus be repeated both in England and France. When we last visited the Grand Trianon at Versailles, we heard an anecdote of the Queen's subsequent visit to Paris in the days of the Empire. We were told that everything at the Grand Trianon had been prepared for the reception of her Majesty, but she elected to stay elsewhere. Perhaps the associations with Louis XIV. and the Regency, of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, were hardly pleasing to her Majesty. She stayed at the palace of St. Cloud instead; and before its destruction we saw a picture that hung on the top of the first staircase, depicting her reception there. Going towards the Furca Pass, we were, of course, reminded of her Majesty's visit to the loneliest and least frequented of Swiss passes. The late Frances Havergal, in her last book, mentions with glee how she abode at the little inn where the Queen had stayed, and occupied the room which had been her Majesty's.

I remember well a lovely summer evening which I spent in the beautiful grounds of Mr. Henfrey on the Lake Maggiore, and by the waters of the lake. Here her Majesty stayed for some time, and it is to Mr. Henfrey's other place, at Mentone, that she has gone for the present spring. It is pleasant to recall that one has personal associations both with

Lago Maggiore and Mentone, that help to the pleasant realising of her Majesty's sojourn in those localities. Mr. Henfrey kindly showed us over his place at Baveno, and told us various interesting particulars. Only a narrow strip of road lies between the renowned gardens and the water. Indeed you might almost throw a stone from the villa into the lake. Mr. Henfrey is a zealous Churchman, and his private chapel is an example of all that can be achieved by wealth, taste, and devotion. The chapel was still open to tourists during her Majesty's sojourn, but the hours of divine service were arranged differently for her and her household. Mr. Henfrey, having placed his château at her Majesty's disposal, had withdrawn; but he received a gracious letter requesting him to receive her as his guest under his own roof. Indeed, when Mr. Henfrey withdrew, he did not go far; but, staying at the beautiful hotel, he studied in everything the comfort of his illustrious visitors. It unfortunately rained during nearly the whole of her Majesty's stay, a circumstance almost unprecedented in that Italian climate, and also in the history of 'Queen's weather.' No weather, however, appeared to daunt her Majesty. With the greatest unconcern she wandered through the dripping rain, examining the rare flowers and plants for which Mr. Henfrey's place is renowned. She mainly occupied the drawing-rooms, on the first stage, which gave the widest views and the most perfect seclusion. There are now trees in the garden that were planted by the Queen's own hands. The schools and charities of the place were kindly remembered. The Queen's own personal *souvenirs* to Mr. Henfrey will always be heirlooms in his

* *Portraits Historiques* — 'Victoria.' Par Hippolyte Castet. (Paris, 1858.)

family. It is an interesting and remarkable fact that the wife of the kindly host, who had for many years been in a drooping and declining state of health, seemed to revive and approach convalescence after the epoch of the Queen's visit.

It is a year or two again since we visited Mentone. The little village, still within the recollection of some years, has expanded into a town, stretching along either bay. Still it offers comparative peace and seclusion to those who avoid the gay city of Nice, and the still gayer gambling capital of Monaco. The curtain of mountains limits indeed the area of expeditions, but it screens from the searching east winds of spring. Once there was only a mule-path that climbed the rocky coast, but now the Corniche-road, one of the noblest in the world, overlooks the blue sea, and is overhung by the green, gray, and gold of the woods. The railway system has at last placed even Mentone in connection with all the world. Mr. Henfrey's villa lies not far from the shore, and at a modest elevation of a few hundred feet. It is within half a mile of the curious old town of Mentone, which until lately was part of the tiny principality of Monaco, and a little further from the bridge of St. Louis, the present barrier between France and Italy. Mr. Henfrey was a member of the great Brassey firm, and did much of the most important and interesting of their work. The Queen, in her Mediterranean home, will enjoy the scenery under perfect auspices, and the sympathy and veneration of the people will respect her seclusion. Though the social aspects of the place have changed so much, though the villas climb the terraced heights, and villages nestle on the very

crag, the natural, the health-giving features are unalterable: the freshness and poetry of the great sea stretching away to Africa; the loveliness, the sublimity of the Maritime Alps.

In Germany also it has been my lot to move in the tracks of her Majesty. The beautiful new palace of Darmstadt is almost a reproduction on a smaller scale, and was the Queen's own gift to her daughter and to her son-in-law, Prince Louis of Hesse. One of the most interesting interviews with which I was favoured was one with Prince Louis of Hesse-Darmstadt. I was staying in the neighbourhood of the delicious scenery of the Odenwald, and was fortunate enough to obtain an introduction to him. He was the picture of health and activity, and was fresh from a good deal of forest-hunting. He expatiated on the magnificent antlers of the huge creatures which he had killed the day before. He told me that he had imported both deer and pheasants from Windsor Forest. But what was most especially interesting in the conversation of his Royal Highness was his earnest and sympathetic description of the work of his late consort the Princess Alice. He explained that her work was of a threefold kind. One portion of it consisted of a training institution for nurses; another was a ladies' bazaar, where ladies of limited means sent the work which they had done, with a view of increasing their narrow means; another respected an orphan institution, where different orphans were under the charge of different ladies. Their kindly offices did not cease when these children had grown up, taken situations, and had in other ways disposed of themselves in the world. Their friends, who kept a kindly eye

upon them, studied their welfare, and sought to promote their interests. The Prince said that, since the death of the Princess, the care of these institutions had devolved upon himself, but that he had the assistance of an English lady. He kindly showed me his pictures, his collection of arms, and other curiosities. He was very glad to welcome the English at Darmstadt. There used to be a good many; and though there was a falling off, he hoped that many would come. Living was not so cheap as it used to be; but the houses were good and moderate, and education was both excellent and cheap. He spoke, too, of the educational influence which might belong to the new grand theatre, which was then approaching completion; and in all that he said of the Princess, and what we heard of her good works, it was easy to trace the beneficent influence of her mother the Queen.

Of course, Queen Victoria has had an infinite amount of poetry written about her—some real and some so-called poetry. Two really great poets have written some really good poetry about her. These respectively are Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Alfred Tennyson. Mr. Tennyson's dedication of his poems to the Queen is so well known that we only venture to quote a verse or two:

'And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And through wild March the thrush
calls,

Where all about your palace-walls
The sunlit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song:
For though the faults were thick as
dust

In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness.'

Of course, Mr. Tennyson's other poems relating to the Prince—

notably the dedication of the *Idylls*—is familiar to all our readers.

Mrs. Browning has a beautiful poem—'Crowned and Wedded.' We take some excerpts:

'She vows to love who vowed to rule, the
chosen at her side.
Let none say, God preserve the Queen!
But rather, Bless the bride!
None blow the trump, none bend the
knee, none violate the dream
Wherein no monarch, but a wife, she to
herself may seem.

Or if ye say, Preserve the Queen! O,
breathe it inward, low;
She is a woman, and beloved! and it is
enough; but so
Count it enough, thou noble Prince who
tak'st her by the hand,
And claimest for thy lady-love our lady
of the land;
Esteem that wedded hand less dear for
accepture than for ring,
And hold her uncrowned womanhood to
be the royal thing.

And now, upon our Queen's last vow what
blessings shall we pray?
None straitened to a shallow crown will
suit our lips to-day.
Behold, they must be free as love, they
must be broad as free,
Even to the borders of heaven's light and
earth's humanity.
Long live she! Send up loyal shouts,
and true hearts pray between,
"The blessings happy peasants have be-
thine, O crowned Queen!"

For many happy years that union was the brightest, both in its royal and in its home aspect. The prayers and vows of the Queen for her people, and of the people for their Queen, have not been left unanswered. The saddest and most memorable of the episodes of the reign was the departure of the blameless and almost ideal Prince, 'the silent father of our kings to be.' Of that episode we have hardly permitted ourselves to speak. But we may be allowed to believe that it has had, if not its compensations, at least its consolations. It has drawn so closely the hearts of the people to the Sovereign, and of the Sovereign to the people. Her Majesty has

been enabled not only to do her duty, but to do it well. Where else—except, indeed, in her own reign, or, perchance, in Queen Elizabeth addressing her people at Tilbury—shall we find in human history an exact parallel to that noble letter which the Queen addressed to her people on the eve of her departure to Mentone? The words are worthy of being written in letters of gold, as they will be engraved on the fleshly tablets of the hearts of her subjects: 'It has ever been her greatest object to do all she can for her subjects, and to uphold the honour and glory of her dear country, as well as to promote the prosperity and happiness of those over whom she has reigned so long; and these efforts will be continued unceasingly to the last hour of her life. The Queen thanks God that He spared her beloved child, who is her constant and devoted companion, and those who were with her in the moment of danger, as well as herself; and she prays that He will continue to protect her, as He has hitherto so visibly done.'

We have mentioned how the

Queen's eyes filled with tears when she showed herself to the rejoicing multitude on the occasion of her succession. The incident was made the subject of a noble poem, by the greatest of English poetesses. Since then the Queen's experiences of the changes and chances of our mortal life have given a sadder and deeper significance to her tears, and have widened and deepened the sympathies of all good men and women to her. Bearing this higher meaning in mind, we may well conclude with the noble strain of our great lyric poetess:

'God save thee, weeping Queen!
Thou shalt be well beloved;
The tyrant's sceptre cannot move,
As those pure tears have moved!
The nature in thy eyes we see
Which tyrants cannot own.
The love that guardeth liberties,
Strange blessing on the nation lies,
Whose sovereign wept,
Yea, wept to wear a crown.

God bless thee, weeping Queen,
With blessing more divine;
And fill with better love than earth's
That tender heart of thine!
That when the throne of earth shall be
As low as graves brought down,
A pierced hand may give to thee
The crown which angels shout to see.
Thou wilt not weep
To wear that heavenly crown!

F. A.

PICTURES OF DUTCH LIFE.

By ELISE A. HAIGHTON.

II.—A. L. G. BOSBOOM-TOUSSAINT.

Mrs. BOSBOOM-TOUSSAINT, who is universally acknowledged as the sun of modern Dutch novelistic literature, was born some sixty-eight years ago at Alkmaar, a little town in the province of North Holland, noted for its cheese-market. The exact date of her birth cannot be ascertained without deeply offending a lady whom all Dutch people venerate too highly to pain. It is a little weakness on the part of this writer to hold certain theories with regard to her individuality, and among these is a keeping secret matters not worth hiding. She does not like to be spoken of publicly, and although she very much likes to be praised, resents even the most friendly criticism. But as she is a prolific writer, and as she publishes under her own name, it is natural that with all the respect shown to her talents and her peculiarities by her countrymen, she should not have been able wholly to escape a certain publicity.

Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint is the daughter of a chemist. A great part of her youth was passed in Harlingen, and she early showed a love of literature. Her first work, written while she was still very young, was *De Graaf van Devonshire* ('The Earl of Devonshire'), an historical novel, laid in the time of Queen Elizabeth.

This was followed by another novel called *The English in Rome*. Both these works were criticised in *De Gids*, a high-class Dutch critical journal, still existing, but at that

time in the heyday of its strength and vigour. The writer of the article was Backhuysen van den Brink, the well-known *littérateur*; and his essay was a critical masterpiece. He stated that Miss Toussaint had been endowed by Nature with all the requisites for historical novel-writing. She seems to have believed him; for a little time after she published *Het Huis Lauernesse*, an historical novel of great merit, which she is universally acknowledged never to have surpassed, though she has written many historical novels since, all of which contain beauties of the highest order. The book made a sensation; her native city was proud of its child, and accorded to her its honorary citizenship.

This writer is a faithful follower of Calvin; her highest ideal is a monkish self-denial and self-sacrifice, that should, however, spring from no binding vows, but from an all-overruling fear of God. A series of novels called the *Leicester Novels* illustrated her convictions, and placed her ideals in the brightest light. Here she treated in full of earnest theories and abstruse doctrines, and she did so in a masterly manner. Still all her power could not save her from striking upon the rock whereon this species of literature so generally suffers shipwreck—the rock of monotony.

In *Abondio II.*, a work less extensive than its predecessors, she proved herself able to portray other characters and other circum-

stances. Abondio II. is the incarnation of moral cowardice: he has not the courage to do those things which he thinks right himself, for fear of public opinion and of being called eccentric. She depicts, with marvellous talent, the many and great evils that result from such cowardice, a feeling so common among the lower classes or inferior minds. After this she returned to her old style. Her last production hitherto is *De Wonderdokter*.

Busken-Huet, at whom we last month glanced, wrote a critical article on Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint's novels. He pointed out all the beauties contained in her works, but at the same time did not conceal the weak points of her talent. She analyses her characters with incomparable psychological truth; her personages are living beings, and their hearts a compound of real human passions. And not only to the reader are her creations living beings. Their author takes the greatest interest in them. This, though it produces admirable results, has also its drawbacks. Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint from time to time makes too great demands upon her readers' attention and interest, by tedious overminuteness in her descriptions of her characters' faintest peculiarities. Indeed, verbosity is her stumbling-block. Thus, if she has to mention a masquerade, a procession, or any ceremony of that kind, she occupies twenty pages or more with the most detailed account of every colour, every flag, every dress. She constantly sins against Lessing's cardinal law, and forgets the due demarcation between painting and writing. Her diffuseness defeats its own end; so overwhelmed are we by words, by a catalogue of details, that it requires no little imagination to construct thence a complete

picture, such as she desires to conjure before our mental vision. This is further obstructed by the fact that Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint's style, though excellent in its own way, is in itself not easy to understand, as it is somewhat affectedly brilliant and overdone with metaphors. Moreover her sentences are exceedingly long, and are written in a mixture of old and modern Dutch. She has studied industriously the masters of the seventeenth century, such as Bor, Coornhert, Hooft, and has tried to familiarise herself with their language for the sake of her historical novels, in order to write them in the Dutch of the period. She has, however, only half succeeded, and the result is often a perplexing mixture of language.

Busken-Huet proved by a number of examples that Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint's fancy was not very rich, and that she was apt to repeat the same ideas and characters. Her ideal, a perfect self-denial for fear of God, is to be found in all her historical novels, now in the shape of a man, now in the form of a woman, now as a young girl, now as a little boy or an aged man. These observations did not please Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint, and incited her to prove that her fancy was richer than one of her countrymen was pleased to think. She wrote a novel called *Majoor Frans*, the scene of which is laid in a modern Dutch family. The work surprised every one; no one had deemed the author capable of writing in this style. This was followed by a second modern romance, *Langs een Omweg* ('Going Around'). But these modern subjects suffered from the same weak points as her historical works, inordinate length in descriptions and conversations; her gold is apt to be wire-drawn until it has grown almost worthless. Neither can she refrain

from interweaving her stories with abstruse speculations and reflections that check and divert the reader's attention.

In those books of which the scene is laid in modern times, Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint, with few exceptions, does not use the language and expressions of three centuries ago. But, on the other hand, she has fallen into the new fault of mixing her sentences with foreign words and phrases. A foreigner reading her books, and finding every page full of italicised words, would very naturally fall into the error of thinking the Dutch language a poor one, while it is in truth very rich. But Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint has relied upon the fact that all educated Dutch people know French, English, and German, and has therefore expressed her ideas in whichever language was most convenient for its utterance, instead of in the pure Dutch she could write if she took more pains.

The specimen of her writing which we give contains all the author's peculiarities, her merits, and her faults. It has been needful to retrench the sentences, but even so they are long; and reflections have been omitted. The scene is thoroughly Dutch. In the remoter districts of Guelderland, in Limburg and elsewhere, there are many such castles inhabited by poor noble families. The scenery is Dutch, so also is the manner of conversing, Frances' character and her sacrifices, and the portrait of the general. In the country and in little towns, it is, unhappily, no rare thing for the gentlemen to be much addicted to drinking and card-playing. The description of the dinner, too, sparkles with truth. Not that it is usual to eat and drink quite so abundantly as Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint describes; but it is

Dutch to think highly of a good dinner, and to judge people according to their way of living. In Holland there are few people who would ask a friend to come and take pot-luck. As soon as Dutch people invite even a single guest, if their means do not make it quite impossible, a dinner of many courses is provided.

To Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint can also be applied the saying, 'Even the good Homer nods sometimes.' This has been amply proved by her latest work, a novel in dialogue called *Raymond the Cabinet maker*. But she has given to Dutch literature so much that is excellent, that she may be allowed to fail sometimes. Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint has been admitted a member of various Dutch learned societies.

MAJOR FRANCES.

'That is Major Frances,' said the driver, turning round to me.

'Major Frances!' I repeated, halfangrily, halfsurprised. 'Whom do you mean by that?'

'Well, the lady of the castle, so all the people of the village call her.'

The driver begged me to alight. I walked in front of him to find the right way; but, alas, we were at the end of a path at the extreme edge of the wood. Opposite to us were ploughed cornfields, which were rather large, and from which we were separated by a half-dry ditch, in which heaps of dead leaves lay rotting, and all manner of marsh-plants were growing luxuriantly. There was not the least possibility of our reaching the other side from here, and even if we could, where should we be then? On the right hand spread nothing but heath, its undulations covered with firs and pines; on the left hand, also separated from

us by dykes and ditches, lay fields sown with potatoes, whose soft light-green foliage was peeping a few inches above the ground; behind us was the forest that we had already traversed without finding an outlet. I looked at my watch; it was about twelve o'clock, consequently the dinner-hour of the labourers who had business in the fields. No information was to be got; there remained nothing for it but to return the same way that we had come up to the toll-bar, and then to begin once more from the beginning. Suddenly we heard a peal of resounding laughter quite close to us, only the sound seemed to come somewhat from above. I looked up in the direction of the hilly heath. On the top of an overgrown hill stood the person who was enjoying our perplexity.

'Major Frances!' shouted the loud voice of my driver, making no attempt to hide his astonishment and annoyance.

It was she herself, Frances Mordaunt, who was mocking us. Really I had not anticipated such a reception.

As she stood there, some feet above me, but still pretty near, I had a good view of her; and I cannot say that this first glance reconciled me to this person who had already caused me so many disagreeable emotions.

Perhaps that was not her fault; but certainly she need not have equipped herself in such an odd way that we doubted at first sight whether a man or woman stood before us. She had gathered up her riding-habit in a way that recalled Zouave trousers, and she had, besides, put over the tight jacket of her dress a wide cloak made of some long-haired material, which was doubtless very useful this sharp cold spring-day, but which, buttoned up to the throat,

was not adapted to show off the beauty of her form if she was really well-shaped. Her head was covered by a gray billycock hat with a soft downward-bent brim; the blue or green veil ladies generally attach to their masculine headgear, and which would have given her a more womanly appearance, was absent. Instead, a bunch of cock's feathers was fastened negligently with a green ribbon, as if the person who wore the hat wished to imitate the wild huntsman of the fairy tale. Last, but not least, she had fastened on her hat by a red-silk handkerchief tied under her chin. As far as this unattractive fancy costume made it possible to me to judge of her appearance, she seemed to be rather delicately built and slim than rough and manly—indeed, the whole person was the exact contrary of what I had dreamed. I had convinced myself that she would resemble Ristori in the character of Medea, have coal-black frizzled hair, and a face expressively lined. Of her hair I could see nothing, owing to the downward-bent brim of her hat; but, as far as I could judge by that part of her face which was not hidden by the ungraceful covering, she was fair and delicately shaped, with a fine Roman nose. Still it needed more good-will than I possessed at that moment to be agreeably impressed by that face, screaming with laughter and tied up in an ugly red-silk toothache bandage. Her laugh sounded to my ears like a provocation, and made me yet more disinclined to give a proof of courteousness to a woman who had so evidently forgotten all feminine self-respect.

'Listen,' I cried,—'listen for a moment, you who rejoice so much at your neighbour's distress. You would do better to show us how we can pursue our road.'

'There is no road to pursue here. He who enters this wood with any other purpose than to have a walk or a ride, does a stupid thing: that is all I can say.'

'And you?'

'I?' she laughed again. 'I sprang with my horse across the dry ditch yonder, between the shrubs—this was my way of getting on to the heath. Imitate me if you feel inclined, though I fear that with a carriage and horse you will not succeed. But where do you intend to go?'

'I intend to go to the mansion De Werve.'

'To De Werve,' she repeated; and now for the first time gave herself the trouble to descend the hill and approach me as nearly as she could, so that it was possible to converse with her. 'What is your business at the castle, sir?' she inquired, in quite another manner than before, no longer in the tone of a somebody speaking to a nobody.

'To pay a visit to the General van Zwenken, and Freule Mordaunt, his granddaughter.'

'The general is no longer in the habit of receiving visitors, and what you have to say to his grandchild you can address to me. I am Freule Mordaunt.'

'I do not intend to beg for any hospitality. I only wish to call at your grandfather's, and to make his and your acquaintance, for I intend to stay a while in this neighbourhood; and I remember that I am related on the maternal side with the family van Zwenken.'

'Still worse, since at De Werve we do not specially suffer from family affection.'

'I have heard this said before, but I am no Rozelaer. I am a van Zonshoven, Freule—Leopold van Zonshoven.'

'And I have never heard that my grandfather lived in friendship

with people of that name. But if you are no Rozelaer, your visit will do less harm; and as a curiosity that any member of the family cares for us, you may perhaps succeed with the general. But it is quite certain that you do not come on business.'

'I can only tell you that I shall assist you as far as possible in your endeavours to keep far from him any trouble or discomfort.'

'That proves your good heart; but if such are your intentions, I hesitate to see in you a member of the family, for such behaviour is totally contradictory to the family traditions.'

'It may be; but you may safely call me cousin, for even in our family there are exceptions, and I hope to prove one of these.'

'If that is the truth, you will be welcome at De Werve; but also as an exception, for as a rule we do not admit strangers.'

'That is a great pity. I think it cannot be your wish to live in such isolation.'

'It is just *my* wish,' she interrupted, with a certain haughtiness. 'My experience is already sufficiently wide to make me have no desire for company.'

'So young, and already such a misanthrope—afraid of the world,' I remarked.

'I am not so very young. I have turned twenty-six; and some of my years may safely be counted as double, just as for soldiers during war-time. You may speak to me as though I were a woman of forty. I have her experience of life. But tell me, what did you take me for at first sight—for an apparition of the wild huntsman?'

'An apparition! Certainly not; that is too ethereal. I thought you a sad reality, a forester who suffered from toothache.'

She seemed piqued for a mo-

ment, her cheeks coloured, and she bit her lips.

'That is rude,' she said at last, and glanced at me with scintillating eyes.

'You wished me to be sincere, and assert you can endure it,' was my rejoinder.

'You are right; and you will find that I have told you the truth. Stretch out your arm, cousin; there is my hand: I think we shall become good friends.'

'That is my sincere desire, cousin; but do not be generous by halves. Allow me really to shake your hand, and not that coarse riding-glove.'

'You are fastidious,' she said, shaking her head; 'but I will let you have your way. Here it is.'

The next instant a fine white hand lay in mine, which I held a minute longer than was absolutely necessary. She did not seem to perceive it.

'But call me Frances; I shall call you Leo. The endless repetition of cousin is so tiresome,' she said cordially.

'With the greatest pleasure;' and I again pressed the hand that now freed itself at once.

No, truly; she was not ugly, even when she had done all she could to make herself look as displeasing as possible. It is true her features were sharp and irregular, but not at all rough or coarse. There was an expression in her face of haughtiness and firmness, that spoke loudly of conscientious strength and independent character; but these qualities were at the same time far removed from vulgarity or sensuality. It was clear that she had struggled and suffered a good deal without greatly diminishing the liveliness and cheerfulness of her spirit. The large blue eyes expressed an open-heartedness which awoke confidence. That they could glisten with indig-

nation, or glow with enthusiasm, I had already experienced.

'Yes, general; I have already carried up the travelling-bag of Meneer van Zonshoven.'

'Indeed! Have you brought a carpet-bag with you?' asked the general, smiling.

'Well, what shall I say to that, uncle? Was it very indiscreet of me to count on a few days' hospitality if I were well received?'

'Of course not—of course not, my boy!' he exclaimed cordially. 'As far as I am concerned, a change will be very welcome to me, only try to be good friends with Frances.'

'Freule has ordered me to show Meneer van Zonshoven his room,' said the faithful Frits, to apologise for following us.

'That is just what I wished to tell you, Leo. Please excuse me for not going up with you myself.' And he parted from me as we reached the great hall.

Frits turned to the left, went up the large oaken-wood stairs that led to the first landing of the left wing, and conducted me just into that part which had given me the impression of not being in a very habitable state. Nevertheless it was an apparently well-furnished room that Frits opened for me, in which, before all else, a large old-fashioned bedstead, with red-silk hangings, attracted my attention. For the rest, I had to grow accustomed to the darkness that reigned here before I could distinguish in what style it was papered, because, from habit, they had only half-opened one of the shutters, although there were three large windows. Frits asked me if I had any orders to give. I directed his attention to this matter, and begged him to let me have more light. He did not stir, but stood as if he had swallowed a stick. Then he said,

'Sir, Freule ordered that the

shutters should remain shut, else the light would be too bright ; for there are no blinds.'

'O, never mind ; open them all the same.'

'Yes, but also on account of the draught ; you see, as we never have guests, we have accidentally forgotten to mend them, and, in fact, there is no glazier in the village.'

I understood him ; the number of window-panes was also rather large.

'Well, then, it is all right, Frits ; I shall content myself with the light of that single window.'

So speaking I dismissed the good man, whose fidelity to his master was evident by his reticence. The one shutter opened fully let in light enough, and the few broken window-panes were carefully covered with white paper, so that they could not let in much air. Now I saw that the walls were hung with tapestry, divided into squares, surrounded by gilt edges, while the wainscot and the wood-work above the door was also painted and gilt in the style of Louis XIV., but evidently executed by no master-hand ; and since no care had been taken to secure it against damp and dirt, both had done the greatest possible damage ; and so had the rats and mice, who had gnawed holes in the tapestry. It was the same thing with the furniture. The red-silk damask coverings, and the fringes and trimmings of a splendid couch, which was standing in a corner, had not only lost their original colour, but were in several places so worn and torn that the horsehair showed through. Then, too, it stood on three legs ; nor was there among all the high antique sculptured chairs—all equally swathed in red silk—one upon which I could have taken a seat in full confidence. On the other hand, a table with a marble

top stood steadily on its three gilt bear-paws, as if it would defy you to move it ; but the top itself was cracked in several places, and here and there large pieces of the mosaic ornament, that represented a star, had vanished.

In striking contrast to these splendid, but neglected, antiquities was a simple modern washstand, of gray-painted wood with light-green borders, that was certainly put, *à mon intention*, just under an oval rococo mirror ; yet this had suffered too much from the influence of wet and damp to be fit for use. Fortunately I had a pocket-mirror in my bag, which served me for putting my hair and cravat in order before dinner, for I had heard that the general was very particular about appearances. Frances had warned me that a bell would be rung to announce dinner, and that I must be very punctual if I wished to avoid giving offence to the general and his aide-de-camp, the captain. I was ready in a few moments ; nor did I need to inspect my room more carefully than I had already done, in order to recognise that the symbol of all De Werve was 'decayed splendour.' I did not a little enjoy the magnificent view that was to be seen from the single window that could be opened. Looking across the moat, now nearly a marsh, that surrounded the castle, there extended a splendid Guelderland landscape. On the right, at a little distance, stood the ruins of a very old castle, that I determined to visit one of these days. It boasted a heavy square tower, which was still habitable for crows and owls, who made great use of it. The arches, which had enclosed painted windows, were still intact, light and dark-coloured ivy twined around them. It seemed to be a majestic ruin, which I should take care to keep in existence when my

rights to De Werve were ascertained; for I could not cease to look upon all these fine possessions with the eyes of a future proprietor. In a certain sense I was so already, and nothing could prevent me from taking possession of it if —Frances were only willing. The dinner-bell rang; I hurried to obey the summons. I was very curious to see how Frances would look after having dressed herself for the evening, for I expected this, owing to the demands of the general. I should also see in it a good omen for myself, after our conversation in the morning.

The general had already taken his seat, and he pointed out to me a chair next to his at the oblong table, a piece of furniture that had certainly already seen service under the despotic government of my great-aunt Sophie, without having lost any of its solidity, and at which twenty persons could have found room, while we were only to be four. I thought of a *table d'hôte* with four guests. The captain, who was also present, took the seat opposite to me; and Frances, who entered rather flurriedly, sat down next to him; and there, in truth, she was in the same washed-out violet jacket that she had put on instead of her riding-dress as soon as she came home. Her beautiful hair had been put up, with more speed than grace, in a silk net that hung down heavily under this rich burden. A discoloured kerchief was fastened loosely round her neck, so as to hide its slim shape and whiteness; even a simple clean collar was lacking, to give to this neglected toilet an appearance of freshness. I certainly could not expect that she should adorn herself in that short space like a princess in a fairy ballet; but such utter negligence of dress seemed, in my opinion, to bode so little good, that after I had glanced at

her for a minute I turned away my head with a look full of disappointment and discouragement. The naughty girl must have seen something of my disappointment; for she smiled maliciously, and fixed her large blue eyes on me, as if she would say, 'Make yourself easy; I do not mind a bit what you think of me.' For the rest, she fulfilled her duties as hostess with exemplary zeal and great dexterity. She served the soups, carved the meats, and even changed our plates—for Frits seemed to consider his duty done when he had brought in the courses. The two gentlemen, and I according to their example, had to submit to this arrangement, and so she had really enough to do. But you will say that a dinner for three persons, with an unexpected guest, and in the country, in a lonely castle, among people who acknowledge themselves *qu'ils sont pris au dépourvu*, and who, above all, are living *en gêne*, could not require so much waiting; and you would be right. I had thought just the same; but at De Werve everything goes as it should not go, or at least as people would not have expected that it would.

In fact, it was no more than their usual dinner; and yet there was an abundance and a variety of food, and an evident effort after dainty dishes that would have allowed it to pass quite well for a dinner-party. We had, besides the soup, a roasted joint and choice preserved vegetables, 'surrogate of the *primeurs*,' as the captain expressed himself; then partridges in aspic, and a dish of *poulet au riz*, with which alone we could have managed quite well; and young cabbages with baked eels, of which the captain said playfully that they had only gone into his net for my sake. As *plat doux* we had a pudding with a wonderful sauce,

in whose interest Frances was called into the kitchen; and, further, a complete dessert.

The different kinds of wine furnished by the captain, who acted as butler with really too much liberality and variety, completed the luxuries of the table. The wines were of the best brands, and our host, as well as his aide-de-camp, took care that I did not overlook this feature. With apparent gratification he pointed out to me the quality and date of each specimen; and although I did all I could not to appear too indifferent, and to excuse my moderation with the habits of abstinence to which I had been used since my youth, I saw plainly that my want of enthusiasm in this respect disappointed them a little.

But neither the crockery nor the table-linen was in keeping with the splendour of the courses. The first, of French china, dating from the same period as the furniture and the gold leathern tapestries, had evidently suffered a good deal from the rough hands of time and servants, and was not only cracked and riveted and incomplete, but whatever was lacking had been supplied by ordinary ware, which enhanced the splendour, but, alas, also emphasised the deficiencies of the other. The large damask table-cloth, that represented the marriage of a Spanish infanta, had certainly been in use as long as the china. It was exceedingly fine, but worn, and had not always been mended with good results. As regards the silver, certain signs exchanged by Frances and the gentlemen, and the speed with which she sent the forks and spoons into the kitchen and ordered them back, showed me that the dozen was far from complete. On the other hand, there was an abundance of beautiful glass, to which the captain directed my at-

tention lest I should overlook this feature, adding, however,

'I do not attach great value to such things. Many a day in the campaign I have drunk beer out of a milk-measure, and champagne out of tea-cups; and I did not enjoy it the less for that.'

'Provided that the cups were not too small,' interrupted Frances.

'But the general,' continued Rolf, without noticing the remark—'the general is so fond of beautiful things that he would prefer not to drink Yquem if it were poured into a sixpenny glass; and while our major (I mean Freule, the commander-in-chief) always manifests the greatest indifference in this respect, I have charged myself, once and for ever, with the care of the general's wine-cellar.'

I could do nothing else than compliment him upon his zeal; but at times there was something in his manner of giving the general his title that did not please me—a tone of sarcasm calculated to offend the old man, although he did not seem to feel the pin-prick. He was thus, in a way, reminded of the inferiority of his means to his rank, which probably roused the jealousy of his former companion-in-arms. Any other person would have risen from his chair with indignation, or have revenged himself by a sharp repartee; but it seemed that van Zwenken lacked moral courage, or that he inclined his head to the blow from a desire for rest.

Frances felt more deeply, and was not willing to be so patient. In her vehement way she did not fail to retaliate.

'Fie, captain!' she interrupted. 'You should not proclaim so loudly that you act as quartermaster here. Are you afraid lest Meneer van Zonshoven will not observe how great are your merits? But, you

see, if every one in this house would follow my *régime*, and content himself with our crystal-clear spring-water, your zeal and care for the wine-cellar would be perfectly superfluous.'

I had noticed that she drank nothing but water.

I left the captain sitting with the cognac-bottle before him. He said he needed this spirit to guard against the chill caused by eating fruit. I looked for a moment at the general, who evinced vocal proof that he was enjoying profound rest; and then walked as softly as I could towards Frances, trying to make my cigar invisible.

She raised herself from the sofa, evidently a little troubled at being taken by surprise in a disconsolate mood; but she composed herself almost immediately.

'You can safely continue smoking, cousin, if you wish to have a talk with me,' she said, and at the same time she tried to smile.

'I am not in the habit of smoking in the presence of ladies.'

'Nonsense! I am not so fastidious; you know that quite well. Shall I make you some coffee? The people yonder do not take any; they continue smoking and drinking till—'

I interrupted her with,

'I want nothing else but to talk confidentially with you for a quarter of an hour. Will you grant me that favour?'

'Certainly; it will give me great pleasure. Take that easy-chair, and sit down opposite to me; that is the best position for a talk.'

I did as she bade, and she continued,

'Tell me, first of all, do you now understand why I do not like receiving company?'

'Perhaps. I venture to suppose that you wish to simplify the way of living, and that the gentlemen do not approve of it. Consequently

you wish to avoid the expense occasioned by receiving guests.'

'I shall never let you guess again. After my grandfather had asked for his pension, and we took up our abode here at De Werve, it was urgently necessary to live more economically. Before then we had lived stylishly. His rank required that he, the commandant of a small fortified town, should receive all the dignitaries, as well as all his own lieutenants; and then (let me acknowledge it) we had both got into the habit of living in abundance, and of being hospitable; and consequently we nearly always had an open table, and there was always enough for some unexpected guests. Owing to different events, but most of all to painful family circumstances, our fortune within the last few years has shrunk so visibly that it was not possible to continue living in the same way. At that time grand-papa saw things as I did. To live less stylishly, and still remain in active service, was impossible; but here in the country we could do just as we liked. We did not want to see company, and we severed ourselves at one stroke from all parasites; and although it was a perilous experiment to go and live in a castle like this, with one man- and one maid-servant, we resolved to do so. We further resolved to take only two or three rooms into use, as I did not mind doing a great deal of the work myself. Activity was a necessity to me. I counted on the kitchen-garden, the orchard, and the farm-yard, that in those days still belonged to De Werve, to provide all our wants; and I secretly hoped that, living thus economically, I should be able to lay by some money, and one day to raise this castle from its state of decay.'

'At first everything went tolerably well; we came in the sum-

mer-time; we both wanted rest badly; the splendid and varied scenery enticed us to ride and drive out; all combined to make us enjoy the solitude. But, alas, the autumn came, with its cold days and long evenings, when the general, suffering from rheumatism, could not mount his horse. Then weariness overmastered him like a plague, that I tried in vain to banish by music and reading. He was not fond of music, and he did not care for reading. He does not even like to see a book in the hands of those who surround him, except it be an illustrated book, such as are fit for a drawing-room table. When we had read the newspaper we had nothing more to say. Every evening we played some games at dominoes and *piquet à deux*. I could hardly do it any longer; but he never found it enough. There was no one here with whom we could converse. Those who are considered the great people are rough and uncultured, and above all belong to the burgomaster's party; the clergyman is not a man of our sort; and that which is called "an interesting conversation" is not to grandpapa's taste, although he always was *par excellence* the man for social life in a large circle. Now he missed all that he was used to, got fidgety and sad, began to languish, and was less and less satisfied with the simple way of living which I had instituted. I could hardly bear to see him so cast down without having the means of helping him. At that time one of his former comrades, who had also retired on his pension,—but for the purpose of living comfortably upon his means, and enjoying life,—invited grand-

papa to spend some time with him. It would be a nice change, and he could thus breathe without trouble in an atmosphere more to his taste. This captain had taken a house at Arnhem, and lived splendidly, a member of the circle that gave the tone to the society of the town. Grandpapa felt quite at his ease there, and stayed the three winter months.

'And you?'

'I stayed at home; no question about that.'

The captain had already arranged the card-table, and rang for Frits to take away the tea-things. We took our seats, and the general fixed the price of the counters tolerably high, I thought.

It was as though the old man underwent a metamorphosis when he held the cards in his hands. His dull sleepy eyes glistened with intelligence and sparkled with enthusiasm. Every limb moved; the tips of his fingers trembled, yet still they held the cards firmly, and he inspected them with an eagle eye, to calculate, with mathematical certitude, what was lacking in ours. His pale cheeks flushed a deep red, his nostrils expanded or contracted according to the chances of the game, and the melancholy man, who usually sat with his head bowed down as though overburdened, was of a sudden seized by a spirit of audacity, of rashness, of foolhardiness, that not rarely procured him splendid successes, and reminded me of the saying 'Good luck is with the rash man.' It is with the audacious player.

I put down my money on the table, and pitied the old man who played for the sake of money.

LADY BEAUTY.

Book the Fourth.

LADY BEAUTY'S CHOICE.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE UNDERTAKES TO PRODUCE A GREAT REALISTIC AND DOMESTIC DRAMA, ENTITLED 'THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.'

[In one of the passages of his narrative, my old friend, when speaking of 'Prendergast,' uttered the pronoun 'I.' As this escaped his lips, he tried to catch back his word, and reddened a little. The secret was out, of course; but seeing his confusion, I affected not to have noticed anything. This artifice, however, did not deceive him; and he immediately told me that he was himself the Prendergast of the story, and an old lover of Sophia Temple. I have thought it well to inform my reader of this fact; but for convenience of narration, I shall continue to describe 'Prendergast' as he originally appeared in the tale. To introduce him afresh, speaking in the first person singular, would, I find, embarrass both writer and reader.]

Greatly was Mrs. Barbara Temple disappointed when the day came for leaving Paris, and still Prendergast had made no farther sign. What could it mean? He was the last man in the world to play the coquette masculine; and it was plain that he had assumed the flirtation posture towards Sophia in his sober sort of way. Why advance so far and then stand still? Mrs. Barbara Temple pondered. Then, cries she to herself, 'I have hit it!' Her explanation was this: Sophia had quietly signified to Prendergast, by one of those tokens with which Love's intercourse abounds, that she loved him not. And he, retiring and even diffident, had taken the hint submissively.

'Very provoking of Sophy!' the little woman said. 'Very provoking, indeed! If it would do any good I should lose my temper with her. But it would not do good—not yet. Prendergast was just the man for her. I am angry; but I will keep my temper.'

And she had her reward. To her great joy, no sooner had they returned to Kettlewell than Prendergast appeared on the scene again, and his attitude towards Sophia had not shifted by a hair's breadth. Evidently, then, Sophia had not repulsed him after all.

'How fortunate I did not get into a passion!' the ruler of her spirit remarked to herself. 'It is a good maxim: Never be really angry; don't even seem to be angry often. I should have had Sophy crying, and set her against Prendergast for life, and all on account of my own hasty judgment.'

Prendergast's coming to Kettlewell was in a marked way. He did not stay with anybody, but put up at the hotel; and, when he called on the Temples, he said that he had run over for a few days, in the hope of increasing the pleasant acquaintance with themselves.

Mrs. Barbara Temple beamed on him one of her brightest looks.

'You speak of your pleasure in renewing the acquaintance,' she said. 'You say nothing about ours. I can never forget all your attention to us in Paris. And what a pleasant time that was!'

'Part of my visit to Paris,' he remarked significantly, 'I enjoyed more than anything in my life.'

He spoke quietly; and Mrs. Temple, glancing at her daughter, saw her bend over her little morsel of lace-work with a crimson cheek.

'She knows now, at all events,' the mother said triumphantly.

And when Prendergast took his leave, Mrs. Temple resolved fairly to open her mind to Sophia.

'I have never, Sophy,' she began, 'never in my life seen a man who more takes my fancy.' The door was hardly shut upon him. 'At first I thought him rather dull and, well—sanctified.' Here our little vivacious sinner made the smallest and genteelest face of scorn. 'But that soon wears off; and I declare that, in spite of my first impression, I find him the most truly lively, entertaining, accomplished man I have ever met. What do you think, Sophy?'

'He is very agreeable,' Sophia said seriously.

'Polite without affectation, witty without coarseness, serious without cant,' Mrs. Temple went on, in true eighteenth-century high style. 'He is a specimen of moderation in all things; and moderation, Sophia, next to repose of manner, is the great mark of a gentleman. A gentleman should be a little of everything, and not too much of anything. Have you ever met so accomplished a man?'

'Yes,' Sophia replied, dexterously affecting not to hear the last part of her mother's speech, 'he is all you say. I like him greatly.'

'I am going to ask him to dinner,' Mrs. Temple said.

'What, mamma!' exclaimed Sophia. 'Company so soon! Wait a little.'

'Not company, child,' the mother answered. 'All alone. He will like it better than a party.'

'And spoil one of our little snug evenings,' Sophia murmured. 'Don't, mamma.'

'Now what is there in our evenings you so enjoy, Sophia?'

'O,' that dear hypocrite answered, 'I enjoy the quiet—and—and our music—and—and your talk, mamma, and all your funny lively stories. You are the best company in the world!'

She put her hands caressingly round her mother's neck; and the mother, who always showed herself pleased with every mark of affection from her daughters, drew one round white arm along her lips, giving it a succession of tiny kisses.

'Poor Prendergast will find it terribly dull at the hotel, Sophy. Really, it would be quite barbarous to leave him there alone.'

'Well, if you must have him, mamma, have some people to meet him.'

'I don't think he would care for that.'

'If he wants society, it is just what he would care for, mamma.'

'But he does not want society,' the mother replied; 'only a little friendly chat and music. Yes,' she added, resolved to carry her point at once, 'I shall sit down and write a note to him this moment.'

The note was sent that evening, but no answer came. Mrs. Temple began to think she must be altogether out in her surmises. But at twelve o'clock next morning, when Sophia was walking in the town, the name of Mr. Prendergast was announced, and he stepped into the room with an apology for the early call on his lips, and yet with an air which plainly said, 'My business is my excuse.' Mrs. Barbara Temple assured her visitor that his call was not inopportune.

'In fact,' she said, with one of her engaging laughs, 'I am famished for a little scandal. Scandal, if you please!'

'My call,' Prendergast remarked quietly, 'is not of that character. The fact is,' he continued, opening his business at once, 'I have been greatly struck by your daughter. I wish to use no flattering language, but I assure you that never, never have I seen any young lady who seemed to me to possess half her attractions. She is a lovely girl!'

He stopped, and a slight moisture in his eyes signified that he was speaking from his heart. Mrs. Temple made a graceful inclination of her head.

'It is always agreeable to a mother to hear her daughter praised,' she said. 'You have not overrated Sophia, as I, who have watched her from her cradle, can tell you.'

'I came to see you this morning partly on your account,' Prendergast continued. 'I know the responsibilities and anxieties of a mother, left in sole charge of so attractive a girl. I do not wish to add to them, and the least intimation of disapproval of my suit on your part will be sufficient to make me abandon it at once, and finally.'

Possibly this grave gentleman, having eyes in his head, may have known that the little mother was dying to call him son-in-law; and this noble speech may have had a trace of humbug in it. But Mrs. Barbara revered this sort of humbug. It was more spicy than reality. She would not have liked Prendergast for really meaning all this civil consideration; but for pretending to mean it, and for uttering the pretence with an air so perfectly pharisaic, she could have kissed him there and then. So, Pharisee feminine against Pharisee masculine, she looked at him with a small and pensive sigh:

'How few men show such consideration!'

'I came also,' said he, 'on my own account. If Miss Temple is engaged, or if she is not likely to look with favour upon me, I had rather know it. At least you might perhaps give me your—your—*advice*.'

Mrs. Temple liked him better than ever.

'Sly fellow!' she said to herself. 'If he dances as neatly as he plays demure, he must make a good figure at a ball.'

Aloud she remarked,

'In these matters I always like to speak with the greatest possible frankness. We are not driving a bargain across a counter. Your offer is to me, so far as I know you at present,' the defenceless woman inserted this attorney clause with the sweetest smile, 'most gratifying. I believe you would try to make Sophia happy, and would succeed.'

It was Prendergast's turn to incline his head now, and he did it.

'As to Sophia,' continued the mother, joining the tips of her fingers in a pondering sort of way, 'that is a much more intricate matter.'

'She is not engaged, is she?' the suitor cried hastily.

'She is not. She is perfectly unfettered. But there has been a sort of attachment; her affections have been—'

'I understand,' Prendergast said with a grave face. 'You wish to break it gently to me. I can assure you I should never try in the remotest way to take from another man affections I should so treasure if they were my own.'

He was speaking his real mind now, and Mrs. Temple looked at him, hovering between admiration and amusement. She had lived in a world of honour, but not quite honour of this sort;

however, she always made her bow to virtue when it was well-dressed and expressed itself genteelly.

'A most high-minded feeling,' she said. 'Just as I should feel myself. But in the present case such scruples would be out of place. This is only a boy and girl affair; there is no money, no prospect, no hope. I have said myself—kindly, but firmly—that a marriage, or even an engagement, is out of the question.'

'And you do not think Miss Temple's heart is irrevocably given away?'

It was a lesson in posture and grimace to see the little worldling's pantomimic answer. She disjoined the finger-tips, and her white hands with upward palms, her gently raised eyebrows, her shoulders quivering with a scarcely perceptible shrug, her quick significant smile, were each members of an unspoken sentence. The meaning was, 'The female heart—*our heart*—is seldom given irrevocably. Try for yourself.' It was perfectly Parisian.

'In that case,' Prendergast said, reading her like print and with rising spirits, 'I am full of hope.'

'You may be,' she answered; 'but still my daughter is not an ordinary girl. There must be great care. Every step must be taken with thought, and with an end in view. In a word, Mr. Prendergast, I think you had better be guided by me from first to last.'

'I shall most thankfully,' he said; and then he composed himself to listen to his monitress.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE DEMONSTRATES THE PRACTICAL HARMONY BETWEEN TWO GRAND MOTIVES OF CONDUCT—'HONOUR YOUR PARENT' AND 'SERVE YOURSELF.'

MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE was in her glory. For a less complicated or a more immediately hopeful undertaking she would scarcely have cared. Sophia she well knew was not an easy woman to turn, and still less was she easy to beguile. Percival Brent had really taken the girl's fancy. He was more prepossessing with his youth and his generous ways than this grave serious stranger verging on middle life. And the mother had found by experience that affection with Sophia was not mere whim or fancy, much less self-interest or passion. Its roots struck deep. For Mrs. Temple's present purpose the mere vulgar bribes of wealth and ease were not enough: all kinds of motives must be engaged, auxiliaries from innumerable quarters must be united; the campaign must be carefully planned; the advance made neither too early nor too late, just at the moment of fate;

and then the kingdom of Sophia's heart would be won. But all this only kindled Mrs. Barbara Temple into excitement. Marrying Car and Sibyl had been child's play: here was a game for a mistress. She felt the same exultation which a chess-player feels who, long used to engage with adversaries to whom he can give a castle and win easily, sits at last facing an enemy who would win if he got a pawn or a move.

'Everything must be done at the right time,' she said. 'Everything must be done in the right way. Whom can I trust for that? Whom? Nobody except myself!'

First of all she talked to Prendergast herself. Mingling a certain deference for his opinion with unconcealed reliance on her own, she told him that for the present he had better not make any advances to Sophia.

'Rather the opposite,' she said. 'Seem to retreat. Sophia has already noticed your liking for her. Now if you withdraw for a while you will puzzle her. She will say, "Did he admire me after all, or not? Has he, on coming to know me better, found me less attractive?" You will excite her curiosity, which, let me tell you, is a great thing for a lover to do. Besides, although Sophia may not care for you, having once secured your admiration, she will not like to lose it. No woman wishes that a man who once admired her should cease to admire her. She may not care for him—she may even have an aversion to him—but she likes him to care for her. And, I say, if Sophia finds that you grow cooler, she will wonder, question with herself, feel a little piqued; and then if you turn round again and confess her power—well—well—she will be rather more disposed to give you some slight encouragement. Am I letting you into too many of our secrets, Mr. Prendergast?'

'With your knowledge of the heart,' he answered, 'I could have vanquished Cleopatra.'

She bowed, but scarcely took time to taste the flavour of the compliment. No sooner was luncheon over, than, making some excuse for dropping Sophia at a friend's house at one end of the town, she drove out to see Sibyl, the first ally whose coöperation she meant to secure. Sibyl was alone in her drawing-room, and certainly all around were abundant signs of the magnitude of the price she had fetched in the matrimonial exchange. She looked very handsome, quite superb, Mrs. Temple thought, as she rose to meet her mother. But there was discontent in her face.

'Sibyl dear,' the mother said, 'your taste is nothing short of perfect. This drawing-room grows lovelier every day. Where did you pick up that little picture?'

'In Bond-street,' she answered listlessly.

'You paid a price for it, I can guess?'

'I know nothing about prices,' Sibyl answered haughtily.

'And never need,' replied her mother quickly. 'Happy girl!'
Sibyl made no answer.

'I have come, dear,' her mother now said, 'to ask your assistance in a very delicate matter. Prendergast wants to marry Sophia.'

'Sophia will not marry at present,' Sibyl remarked.

'Not unless we are very judicious. But with management she will. Prendergast is a man after her own heart, just the sort of man she would have fallen in love with if this ridiculous affair with Mr. Brent's son did not stop the way. Now Sophia must not pass this offer by. I am determined she shall not. Prendergast is very rich, and he is willing to settle down here.'



See p. 357.

'And what of that?' Sibyl asked.

'What of that? Why, here you three girls will be in the one neighbourhood, and that a pleasant one. Each will have a handsome establishment; and think how you will be able to put yourselves at the head of everything. You will soon be the leaders of the county; with your looks, and your cleverness, and your taste you ought to be. You can have your London houses, you and Sophia immediately, and Car when those old people die. You can have your trips to the Continent, your entertainments at home—O Sibyl, why had I never such a

chance when I was your age? How I should have enjoyed the world!’

‘You did enjoy it, mamma.’

‘Now, Sibyl,’ the mother went on, not noticing this remark, ‘there is one thing I wish you to impress upon Sophia: that is the comfort of riches. You can speak from experience; tell her how fine a thing wealth is. Impress it upon her. You might even say, for you know Sophy’s turn of mind, that you find yourself able to do so much good—to help the poor—charitable work—churches—anything can be done with money. That is my special charge to you, Sibyl; the next time you and Sophy meet tell her something of your experience of riches. Now where is Archibald?’

‘He went into the library after lunch,’ Sibyl said rather sulkily. ‘He wanted to read the *Times*.’

Two minutes later Mrs. Barbara Temple was confronting her son-in-law Goldmore, who, with his newspaper laid across his knee, waited to hear what it was of which her shrewd face was full.

‘Sophia has had an offer—at least it has been made to me—from Mr. Prendergast.’

Goldmore bowed his head in a way which signified approval of Mr. Prendergast. Then he said,

‘It would have been a good connection if—’

‘If what?’

‘If Sophia had not fallen in love with Brent.’

‘Now, my dear Archibald,’ cried Mrs. Temple, slapping her hands together slightly in her vexation, ‘surely you know better than that. Sophia has not given her heart away; it is a girlish whim, and we might safely leave it to cure itself, only time presses. Sophia must marry Prendergast; I should die of chagrin if I saw another woman’s daughter get him now. In this matter you can help me. You have weight and dignity, and you speak in a commanding way. Now I want you to press this marriage upon Sophia, from the point of obedience, duty, and prudence. You can tell her how much my heart is fixed upon it; and you might say something about the blessing attached to those who obey the fifth commandment.’ Here our little mother coughed slightly, blessing being rather a foreign expression to her organs of speech. ‘Sophia is a serious girl, and will think of that.’

‘But, Mrs. Temple,’ Goldmore replied, ‘I hardly like to use such an argument with Sophia. From what I have seen of her, I should not for a moment doubt that her conscientiousness is much greater than my own; and it seems rather hypocritical, and even oppressive, to urge upon the girl an obligation for which, as a matter of fact, she has a greater regard than I should

have had myself. Besides, if she really loves this young fellow—'

'A lad without a sixpence, and without a prospect! O, Archibald, you are not giving your mind to the subject! Tell me now'—the little woman faced him like some warrior of argument—'ought not both men and women to regulate their lives with an eye to prudence, common sense, and the main chance?'

Poor Goldmore! Prudence, common sense, and an eye to the main chance had been his laws of life; prudence, common sense, and an eye to the main chance had made him a two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-pound man. His own deities were before him, and he must do them reverence.

'You are a wise woman,' he said; 'I will do as you desire. I will talk over the matter with Sophia.'

'Now,' Mrs. Barbara Temple said, as her trim little chestnuts whisked her along to the residence of Egerton Doolittle, 'I have secured Sibyl and her husband.'

She checked off two fingers.

'I want three more. I shall get them; and then, Sophy dear, I think your future will be safe; and in years to come you will thank your poor old worldly mother!'

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH EGERTON DOOLITTLE GIVES HIS VOICE FOR SEVERE MEASURES IN THE CASE OF HER THAT WILL NOT WHEN SHE SHOULD.

WHEN Mrs. Barbara Temple was ushered into Caroline's drawing-room, she caught sight of the young husband and wife sitting side by side on a sofa. Her coming was evidently unexpected, and Egerton, ejaculating 'My gracious!' dashed out into a conservatory adjoining the drawing-room, while Caroline, composing herself, met her mother with just the smallest signs of momentary confusion. The little woman glanced at two love-birds perched side by side in a cage which hung over the conservatory threshold, and then she recalled Sibyl, sitting in her lonely splendour.

'For some things,' our little Pilpay remarked privately, 'for some things a young fool is better than an old sage. But these are only the etceteras of life; Sibyl has secured the grand thing, after all, and more of it than Car. Life is pretty equal.'

'Caroline, my dear girl,' she said after a few casual words, 'I have come this morning to consult you on a matter of the greatest importance. I know your good sense, and the energy with which you can act when you have decided what is right to be done. If it was not for you, Caroline, and your tact and judgment, I should be in despair.'

With this insinuating preface she told the story of Prendergast's proposal ; and after expanding in the most glowing style in praises of his person, character, and estate, she turned to the dismal topic of Sophia's infatuation for that penniless Australian boy.

'For this whim, this caprice, this idea, which is not worthy to be called an idea, she will actually sacrifice a man who is not only a man of family and fortune, but whose character is of the very pattern which she most professes to admire. I protest, Caroline, it will drive me wild.'

'It certainly is unfortunate,' Car said.

'And unless you coöperate with me, work with me, and work hard and wisely too, Sophia will lose the best chance in life she ever can have. I can do nothing without your assistance, dear.'

'I shall do all in my power, mamma,' Caroline replied ; 'but you must tell me what you wish.'

'It was on my tongue, dear girl. You must have a conversation with Sophia—let it seem accidental—and say you have heard about Prendergast. Praise him a little ; but that is not your particular point. Set before Sophy *my* delight at the idea of the marriage ; the happiness it will give me ; how miserable I shall be if it goes off. Sophia is an affectionate girl, and I believe would do a very great deal simply to show her love to me. Now you must put before her strongly my feelings and hopes ; for, indeed, dear, if Prendergast does not marry her I shall die of vexation. Now go over and over this matter with Sophia. You know, Car, she is not like you, clear-headed, of sound judgment, seeing what is right at a glance, and firm to carry out her ideas. She is soft, yielding, tender-hearted. If I were you I should coax her a little, kiss her, be tender with her ; all that will tell with Sophy. Now I know, my love, I have given you a difficult task to perform ; and nothing but my knowledge of your tact would have encouraged me to ask you to undertake it. But you will do it, and do it well. Sophia will marry Prendergast, and the praise of the affair will be yours.'

The little mother had not said one syllable about Car's cleverness which was unmerited ; but however astute that young lady might be, she was like an osier wand in the skilled hands of her mother. With wonderful enthusiasm Car took up the scheme ; and not less wonderful was the simple obedience with which she resolved to follow out the directions that were given her. Independent and inventive as she was in herself, she yet learned her mother's words by heart, as faithfully as if she had been getting up a scene in a play. She did not insert a word of her own ; and the more she showed her readiness to follow her mother's instructions implicitly, the more did that unrivalled student of

human nature land her quickness, her resource, her capacity for manœuvre and benevolent stratagem.

Presently Egerton looked in from the conservatory giggling and blushing.

'I have heard all you have been saying to Carry,' he said. 'Twasn't listening, I hope. Couldn't help it if it was, the other door being locked. O Mrs. Temple, do you know I really think you must be a clever woman; I really think you must be. You seem to know everything and to manage everybody. I quite agree with you about instilling things into Sophia's mind. Impress upon her'—here Egerton teapotted himself, and with outstretched hand began to spout fluently—'impress upon her the tremendous importance of marriage. Tell her that marriage is the sort of thing that must be done, you know. You can assure her from me that it is tremendously important. And you can tell her that my experience is that it isn't so much matter whom you marry as the thing itself. Do that, and the rest will follow. Of course I was not speaking of myself quite, you know, not altogether; for Carry is such a tremendously nice girl that I don't hardly know that I could have found another wife who would have made me so happy—at least, not without a great deal of trouble, you know. But I mean you are to impress on Sophia that, in a general way, it does not much matter whom you marry. And then, if she won't see it—well, I scarcely know what to advise.' The stream now became intermittent; and Egerton began to show symptoms of wandering in his mind. 'I was reading some book lately about a girl that would not marry somebody; and what her parents did was, they shut her up in some tower somewhere, and kept her on bread and water. But you see you have no tower at the Beeches. Still, you might try the bread and water. It is wonderful what diet does.'

Off flew our elderly little Venus once more, charioted hither and thither on the errands and the mischief of love. She knitted her brows, she made her little gloved finger-tips meet, she set a reflective mouth, and thus she conned over the state of her plans.

'Sibyl is to place before her the comforts and the advantages of wealth; Sibyl will do it well. Archibald Goldmore is to press duty upon her, and take her on the ground of the fifth commandment. I can see him now—slow, solemn, parsonic. O, if I had time to laugh over it, I should. And Caroline will work on her feelings: that will come best from Car, who has not much feeling of her own, because Sophy will reason, "Well, if Car thinks so, there must be something in it." Interest, obedience, affection. Yes, it is not bad. And there is more to come. Sophia, Sophia, I shall marry you, without a tower, or bread and water either! Simply by tact, dear—by tact.'

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE RECTOR OF KETTLEWELL QUITE AGREES WITH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE.

HER flying wheels next ceased their swift revolutions at the door of the Rectory, and the little woman alighted with the step of five-and-twenty. She shook her head as she marked how the once brilliant flower-beds lay neglected, and the stone steps, once white as porcelain, were turning green with neglect. Dead leaves strewed the path; the blind of the dining-room window hung awry; whatever she saw told her that the enchanter Gold had moved off with his wand to other domains, and that his successor Poverty had already marked all things for his own.

'I should just like Sophia to see this place,' our moralist said. 'It would be a lesson for her.' She spoke as solemnly as if she had been the pensive and didactic Mr. Hervey walking among his tombs. 'A few months ago everything was trim, and shining with money; now—and this is poverty, pious poverty!' she said, with inexpressible scorn in her face. 'I hate poverty.'

The door opened, and instead of the man-servant of other days, well-clad, well-brushed, and obsequious, there stood before her an ill-dressed girl, whose skirts, tucked up on one side and loose on the other, told of work hastily left. Mrs. Barbara Temple noted the red bare arm and the dirty finger-nails; she lost sight of nothing; and all she saw turned into a moral lesson.

'I like to live,' she thought, 'but better be dead than poor.'

As she was going into the library a whiff from the kitchen tickled her nostrils, but not gratefully.

'Soup, I suppose,' she murmured again. 'Well, I have not to eat it, so I need say nothing!'

The part she had here assigned herself was none of the easiest, and she felt she must be discreet and guard her lips. Mr. Brent advanced to meet her, and tried to put on his old cheery smile, but the conspicuous failure made the attempt more dismal than a plain honest sigh. Mrs. Barbara conversed with her usual spirit and gaiety for a few minutes until the question came naturally,

'Have you any news of your son?'

'None since the vessel was last heard of,' he answered. 'At that time he was tolerably well.'

'I liked that young man,' she said. 'I never regretted anything in my life more sincerely than having to abandon the hope of calling him a relation.'

'Has your daughter abandoned it?' Mr. Brent asked, with a faint smile.

'How kind of you!' she thought; 'you have said just the word I wanted.'

'That question,' she answered, 'is one which I cannot reply to as readily as I should wish. We know what young people are; there is always a great deal of sentimentality about them. It amounts to nothing. In time it wears off. While it lasts, however, it makes their management difficult. Of course you are of my opinion, that the keeping up of this engagement, even in the remotest way, would be injurious both to your son and to my daughter. No good can ever come of it, and the sooner it is finally settled the better for both of them. Don't you think so?'

'I do,' the poor clergyman replied.

He had no spirit left. Never a man of independent will, he was now reduced to a mere animated machine, worked in matters of this sort from the outside.

'My daughter has a wild romantic attachment to your son,' Mrs. Temple continued. 'Now you can help me to put an end to this affair. You only can put an end to it, but you can do so.'

'I can, can I?' he replied.

'Yes; tell Sophia that you do not approve of it, and that you consider it likely to be injurious to Percival, which it surely will be. Say with perfect truth also—you can—that you are tolerably certain that even if she remained constant to him he would not remain constant to her. Just fancy, Mr. Brent! a young man, at the most impulsive period of life, thousands of miles away, and with no hope of seeing her for years! Constant, indeed! Why in a fairy tale it would be too absurd to be true!'

He sat before her, passive and receptive, agreeing to everything, promising everything. But, indeed, if the proud Sibyl, and the inflexible Goldmore, and the intellectual Caroline, had bent to her will, little wonder if our poor Rector bent too, broken as his nerves and will were by the one terrible storm of Fate. Whenever she asked him, 'Do you think so?' he answered, 'I think so.' Whenever she said, 'Will you say so to Sophia?' he replied, 'I will say so.' And thus she faced him, energetic, full of plot and will, talking fast, and with frequent action driving her meaning home. An onlooker might have thought the scene a private mesmeric experiment, and Mrs. Barbara Temple the strong and resistless operator, and poor Mr. Anthony Brent the helpless subject around whose volition and reason another mind was coiling itself in swift and powerful folds.

'So,' said our little mother, when this task was done, 'you are to set before Sophia the facts of the case, and its probabilities. You are to tell Sophia that Percival ought not to marry her if he could, and that, in time, he would not marry her even if he ought. Interest, duty, affection, probability. Sophia, I shall hem you in, and force you to yield!'

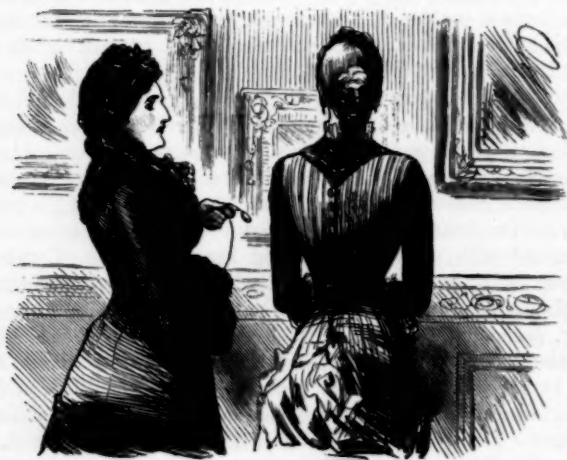
CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE PLAYS THE PART OF MRS. SOBER WITH GREAT SUCCESS.

PRENDERGAST remained to be moulded, and our strategist took care to have an interview with him before the great event of his proposal came off. For this dialogue she assumed a specially grave, not to say pious, air, as she now fully understood Prendergast's habit of mind.

'It is a serious matter,' she said, in the voice and face of her new character of Mrs. Sober. 'Yes, marriage is a serious matter.'

To this sentiment, of which the force, like that of many a popular sermon, lay rather in the delivery than the matter, Prendergast assented, and business began.



See p. 393.

'You are going to propose to Sophia?' she said, in confidential tones; for, indeed, they had chatted the affair over several times.

'I am, with your permission.'

'Very well. Are you above taking a hint?' she paused here, for the most engaging smile made up of self-confidence, self-depreciation, and a coquettish consciousness that all the charms of sex had not yet forsaken her—'are you above taking a hint from a withered old woman?'

'You must be going to take me to consult some elderly friend of yours?' he answered, with successful raillery.

'Capital, capital!' she cried, forgetting Mrs. Sober, and clapping her hands. 'O Prendergast, I do wish you would be

more like that all the day round! It becomes you vastly. O, I should make something of you, too—in time!’

Grave Prendergast could stand this no longer. He burst into a laugh, which our little mother merrily echoed, until she again remembered that seriousness was her part to-day. Turning as solemn as a Quakeress, she asked,

‘But, seriously, will you take a hint?’

‘Seriously, from you I will take as many hints as I get.’

‘Well then, remember this: Sophia is a girl whose head is full of the idea of usefulness and activity, and being elevated, and elevating others, and—you can finish the sentence better than I; for you hear more of that sort of talk. I am not saying anything against all that. In its way, and at proper times, it is very well; but I maintain, and always have done, that it is not



See p. 363.

the thing a woman should live for. Just fancy, my dear Prendergast, what a whole world full of serious people would be! Serious people, and nobody else! Really, I believe you serious people would want a few of us sinners back to tickle you a little! But this is not my business. We must take Sophia as she is. She has not grown up in the way I expected, but she is a good girl, and amiable. When *shall* I get back to my point? Sophia, then, being so full of these notions of service and aspiration and duty, and all the rest, in proposing to her you must fiddle on that string—I mean,’ said Mrs. Sober, withdrawing this rather flippant form of speech, ‘you must let her know that such is your view of life also. It is, is it not?’

‘It is,’ Prendergast answered, divided quite between sincerity

and amusement at the singular little idol that chatted away before him.

'Then be careful you let Sophy know it. And, Prendergast, be careful, too, that you tell Sophy that you have a work in life—I suppose you have—and that she is the woman that can help you to perform it. Present yourself before Sophia in that form, as a man who has a work to do—such a work as she would approve of, such a work as she would do herself if she could. Tell her that she can give you strength, guidance, and all that sort of thing. This is the way such a girl must be carried. We none of us like to be thought mere dolls, dressed for your drawing-rooms, and least of all do girls like Sophia like it. Tell her you will go through the world leaning on her, as they do in pictures, half supporting, half reclining. Tell her that you will draw inspiration from her eyes and from her character, and then Sophia is yours. O, I wish I had been a man, just to teach the rest how to propose to us !'

'Well, Mrs. Temple,' Prendergast said, repressing his smiles with no small difficulty, 'there is a great deal in what you say. And I can assure you that whatever woman I proposed to, or thought I should wish to propose to, I should meditate something of the kind.'

'If you really mean it,' she said, 'it will come a great deal better. It always does.'

'Surely you would not have me say what I did not mean !'

'Fudge, Prendergast, to put it in that way ! In love-making we are not understood to mean what we say. No more than a monarch on the stage is understood to mean what he says when he promises to bestow kingdoms on people. (He has two rooms meanwhile, which he means to keep to himself.) But in this particular case, if you do mean it, why of course you will say it with more emphasis. Ah, dear me,' she added, resolved to efface the impression of her flippancy, 'I daresay you are right, Prendergast, after all, and we wrong. But the world is so pleasant, one can't help loving it.'

She sighed this out so naturally that Prendergast reflected that there must be good in this merry old pagan after all ; and he pleased himself with the thought that before she departed from human life she might rise to a higher mood and confess her follies. So our little mother showed admirable tact, for she gave the finishing touch to her pupil ; and when bidding him good-bye, she asked :

'Now, Prendergast, will you say exactly what I have told you ?'

He answered,

'I will, exactly.'

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH MRS. BARBARA TEMPLE REVIEWS HER CONDUCT, AND THEN LAYS HER DOWN TO SLEEP.

THE labours of the day were over. The whole assault had been planned. In her bedroom Mrs. Barbara Temple sat like a general in his tent the night before the battle. She was reviewing her forces, measuring their strength, settling the order in which they should advance.

'It is important, however Sophia may affect to despise it, that Prendergast's wealth, and what it will do for her, should be put before her fairly. I can trust Sibyl for that: no one would manage it better than Sibyl.'

She paused as her first company passed mentally before her to the battle. The array satisfied her. Then she fixed on the next.

'Duty—obedience. Sophia has always laid great stress on these, and not in affectation either: O, no, she means what she says. Well, I think when Goldmore talks to her about a parent's authority—I *think* it will move her.'

And so the second company marched past under the general's approving eyes. Number three came in view.

'Her affection for me is genuine. Dear girl!' the little mother said with a warming of her heart, 'she does love me! Well, what then? I love her, and I am doing the best for her. When Caroline tells her that this marriage will satisfy me and make me happy, I believe she will yield. And Car will do that for me, and do it effectively. O, yes; I trust Car.'

And so company three went by, and was approved. Which was number four? Yes, she remembered.

'I wonder will Mr. Brent bear in mind what I told him? I think I shall drop him a line to refresh his memory and to bind him to secrecy. If he manages well he might accomplish more than any; but he may blunder—nay, he is the sort of man who will blunder if he can.'

And so, warned by a little frown from the commander, company four went by. Company five—O, well she knew it: with this she was to conquer.

'Prendergast—Prendergast; he is my mainstay after all. O, yes; he will touch Sophia at the very heart. And he will say all I wish. There is one thing about these serious people: they are half deceiving themselves and half deceiving others, and so they assume a most valuable appearance of earnestness. Now I could not to save my life pretend to be interested in being useful; but I suppose I should be more telling in serious society if I could. Prendergast will sermonise about opportunity and duty, and Sophia will listen, just as she listens at church—I can

see her now—and the woman who listens to a suitor like Prendergast is—married !’

And so the whole army was reviewed ; the forces were irresistible : stroke after stroke ; Sophia would be conquered at last.

‘ And now let me see,’ the little mother continued, throwing herself back in her chair as she pondered her own responsibility in the transaction. ‘ I am a worldly woman ; I am making a match for my daughter which is worldly-wise—nothing more, and nothing less ; I am doing all I fairly can to urge her to this marriage, pressing her on by every means in my power. Well, am I wrong ? Why, even on the showing of good people or romantic people I am marrying her to a man who is in every way likely to make her happy, although she may not yet acknowledge it. He is good, upright, and kind. And then on *my* showing I am giving her a position in society, snatching her from a mistaken engagement, from years of waiting which are sure to end in solitary disappointment or in wedded poverty. Give me for my daughters a life well carpeted, well cushioned, well furnished, well dressed, and my head for it if in ten years’ time they are not the first to say to the old mother, “ You were right, after all.” Yes, the good people talk about doing right and not pleasing yourself ; I do right—and please myself too. Sophy, Sophy, to-morrow night you will be engaged to Prendergast. I shall have done it ; I have done it already. And if you drop a few romantic tears—why, tears are soon wiped off ; but wealth, fortune, position—these remain from day to day, and from year to year, and these make life, let saints and poets say what they please.’

So having settled matters with her conscience in this frank and fearless way, our little mother laid her down to sleep ; and she slept that light semi-conscious slumber common with those who know that upon the coming day a great triumph shall be theirs.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH THE STAGE-MANAGER FINISHES HER DAY’S WORK.

By what complicated mechanism Mrs. Barbara Temple arranged all that happened on this day I must not tell. The description of her successive artifices would fill a volume. Enough to say that she had settled the speeches, the times, the persons, the places in every particular ; the day was, indeed, occupied with the production of the drama of the spider and the fly, and the powerful effects, the incidents, the plot, the traps in the stage, the risings and fallings of the curtain, all were done at the instance of that renowned dramatic authoress and stage-manager, Mrs. Barbara Temple. Having said this, I shall without another

syllable of explanation tell you what happened. All that need be said, and this only for explanation, is that she contrived without any suspicious coincidence to bring each of her subordinates into contact with Sophia between morning and evening of one day, and that the day when—still by her arrangement—Prendergast was to make his proposal. If I were to follow all the windings of this day, the shiftings of scene from place to place, it would be very tedious; and after all, what is my object? First, to declare the foresight and contrivance of our little mother; and secondly, to show how poor Sophia was environed with motives all impelling her to break faith with Percival Brent. These ends can be fully attained by the simple record of certain fragments of dialogue which bore upon the great event of that memorable day.

I. SIBYL AND SOPHIA: MONEY V. LOVE.

'Believe me, Sophy, marriage is a lottery; I don't think after a month is over love makes much difference.'

Sibyl said this after the mention of young Brent's name. She was reclining on a sofa, looking very beautiful, but cold, proud, and with plain tokens of disappointment amidst all her disdain.

'I can't believe that,' Sophia replied. 'You did not always think so yourself.'

'I was not married then,' Sibyl answered; 'I am now.'

It was on the tip of Sophia's tongue to say, 'If a girl of twenty-two marries a man of fifty-three, is her view of marriage to be taken as the true one?'

Sophia did not mean, you may be sure, to ask this home-thrusting question in any taunting way, but quietly and reasonably. She felt, however, that such a question must be hurtful to her sister's feelings, and said nothing at all. This led Sibyl to believe that her argument was taking effect.

'Sophia,' she said, in a stern way altogether her own, 'marry Prendergast. He is wealthy, good-looking, and his tastes are like yours. Now ask yourself, are you not more likely to be happy with such a man, more likely to have your own way and please yourself, than with young Percival? Percival may forget you. If he remembers you, he may be unable to marry you. If he marries you, he may disappoint you as a husband. Just consider the number of chances which have all to come right before you have any certainty with him! And here is a man of whom every one of your friends approves, and whom you admit you respect yourself, making you an offer which I call a splendid one. O Sophy, you can't refuse him! If you did,' Sibyl said, growing more and more convinced even by her own argument, 'you would be silly beyond expression. You won't disappoint us all, Sophy; you can't—I know you can't!'

II. ARCHIBALD GOLDMORE AND SOPHIA: PRUDENCE V. LOVE.

'My dear Sophia,' Goldmore said, taking her hand and speaking to her in a grave fatherly way, and with intentions that were unmistakably kind, 'I wish to say a few words to you about my friend Prendergast.'

Poor Sophia turned red and pale almost in the same instant. A lecture from Sibyl was a trifle compared to this.

'I have known him more or less intimately for years,' the elephantine magnate continued. He talked as if he was dictating a testimonial. 'A more upright, honourable man does not breathe. He is charitable and humane to a fault. Believe me, Sophia, I would not open my lips to you on the subject if I did not in my soul believe that Prendergast will make you truly a happy woman, and that he is worthy of you. I can say nothing more in his praise.'

Sophia began to cry, not knowing where to turn, and Goldmore, taking upon himself almost unconsciously the paternal relation, gently patted her on the shoulder. Indeed, it seemed as if affairs had only to be pushed a little farther for him to bestow upon her a paternal kiss.

'Marry Prendergast, Sophia,' Goldmore continued, repeating unawares his wife's concise counsel. 'You are of course free from all engagement to young Percival Brent. Remember, I have not a word to say of that young fellow but praise. Under the auspicious circumstances of your original engagement I considered it a happy event. And even when he left England, I thought perhaps things might turn out well for you both. Since then I have'—here he reflected on the interview with Mrs. Temple and her charges to him—'since then I have thought things over, Sophia, and I feel you ought to be—*prudent*.'

'Prudent!' 'prudent!' It was the word that had been rung in the poor girl's ears until she was ready to scream at the sound of it.

'And besides, Sophia,' Goldmore continued, 'your mother wishes it. I am far from saying that any girl is bound to consider even her parents in a matter so nearly concerning her personal happiness; but, Sophia, when the man is so very desirable, and when a parent's will is so very strongly expressed, I think a dutiful character like yours will—will weigh the matter, Sophia!'

Sophia was really broken down now and sobbing piteously; and Goldmore, who would not have wounded her without cause on any consideration, judged that these tears were shed over the final wrench from Percival Brent.

'You are naturally agitated, dear girl,' he went on, in his three-syllable style of speech. 'You are a sympathetic nature, and

you regret your late engagement. You are one of those women who are always delicate in your dealings with our sex—more delicate perhaps than most of us deserve. But, now that the thing is done, every hour your sorrow will diminish and your future will grow brighter. Don't cry any more, Sophia; you are acting prudently, and you have obeyed your parent.'

III. CAROLINE AND SOPHIA: LOVE & LOVE.

'Mind, Sophy,' Car said, 'if Prendergast was an elderly man like Goldmore I would not have had you marry him, not if he could have heeled your boots with diamonds. Don't you see how dull Sibyl is? It is nothing in the world but that she is tired of that old fellow. Now you may not think Egerton very clever or witty; but I assure you he is a capital husband, and I have grown fonder of him than I could have believed. I would not see you so moped as Sibyl, not if mamma were to go on her knees to us. But really, Sophia, Prendergast is more than passable; he is very agreeable.'

'Well, but being agreeable does not make you love a man,' Sophia ventured to say.

'No,' Car answered readily; 'but when a man's character is such as you approve, and when his position and prospects are good, and when he is agreeable in addition, you are safer in marrying him—safer, do you hear, Sophy?—than you would be in marrying after the most romantic of courtships.'

Sophia was silent before Car's reasonable assertion.

'Besides, Sophy'—now she came to her special appeal—'mamma is quite in terror lest you should refuse Prendergast. She has taken such a fancy to him. With his serious ways one would hardly have expected that; but so it is. Prendergast will be making mamma a saint one of these days if he enters the family, he has such an influence over her.'

It was not altogether fair in Car to hold out such a motive to her sister. She well knew how Sophia bewailed her mother's infatuated worldliness; and how, in her gentle daughterlike way, she was always trying to make her mother less of a pagan and a mocker. This one sentence of Car's told more with Sophia than all that had been said to her before. She was in that melancholy mood when women, and men too, often make life-long sacrifices at the bidding of religion. What if Prendergast did really make her mother in her last days a better and a wiser woman! She sighed, and looked up at Car receptively.

'No doubt of it,' Car said, in a kind of reply to her sister's glance. 'Mamma will be the happiest woman in England if you marry him. And she has been a kind mother to us, and we ought

to please her if we can. And, besides, as I said, he may really be useful to mamma, she thinks so much of him.'

Divided was Sophia's heart, and her loyal will was shaken when she left her sister. Who could stand such a succession of argument and appeal? or, if we choose to bring in a new metaphor, what citadel could resist such a number of battering-rams, managed by that eminent pagan military engineer, Mrs. Barbara Temple? Yes; Sophia was feeling the weakness of her sex: '*I faint, I yield.*'

IV. EGERTON AND SOPHIA: IDIOCY V. LOVE.



AS with sad slow steps she was walking down the avenue, she was startled by the apparition of Egerton, who suddenly appeared, peeping over the top of a holly-bush. He glanced apprehensively round, like a paid assassin in a tragedy, and then, coming round the holly-bush with long secret Tarquin strides, he advanced to Sophia's side.

'Come here,' he said, in an awful whisper.

And he returned behind the holly-bush as he came forth. Sophia did not know what to think; but,

waiving his manner in her estimate of the position, she came to the conclusion that he had got a hedgehog, or some other natural curiosity which he wished her to inspect; so she followed him. No sooner was she at his side than, with three or four more furtive glances, he stooped to her ear, and, in a whisper of the profoundest caution, said,

'Sophia! take my advice, and go and get married. It's an awfully nice thing. You may take it from me that it is not so much matter whom you marry as the thing itself. Do that, and all the rest will follow. Don't let out to any one that I told you.'

And then, with an air of secrecy, which was frightfully suggestive, and the same long and ghostly strides, he made for the house, leaving her to resume her path as best she might.

V. THE REV. ANTHONY BRENT AND SOPHIA : DESPONDENCY V. LOVE.

'Miss Temple,' the clergyman said, with a melancholy air, not the least feigned, although, by casting a gloom over his conversation, it greatly furthered Mrs. Barbara Temple's ends, 'times have changed, changed indeed. I had a letter from my son two days ago.'

How that good little heart leaped to hear it! Percival! he seemed near her once again, and she would be strengthened now.

'How is Percival?' she asked gently.

'Pretty well,' the Rector replied; 'tolerably well, I may say. But he writes in bad spirits. Little wonder; his prospects are very uncertain. I don't think he will ever return to England.'

'He meant to come back when he left,' poor Sophia said, turning sick at heart after her little gush of pleasure.

'That I know,' the Rector answered, in the same down-cast tone. 'But his intention will change, if it has not changed already. Percival has to face a life of struggle. I was very glad to find that you and he had quite broken off from each other.'

'We wanted to act prudently,' the poor girl said. O, how delighted she would have been had the Rector, in the remotest way, recognised that an understanding existed between them!

'It was prudent,' he continued. 'To you such a thing could only have meant bondage and disappointment; and to him—well, Sophia, greatly as I like you, I don't really think Percival would have been so likely to prosper had he been still engaged to you.'

'I could not bear the thought of injuring him,' the poor thing said. She was on the edge of a fit of crying, but Mr. Brent, never a man of observation, and now quite occupied with his own cares, did not notice her agitation.

'I am sure of that,' he replied. 'Of course that is why you so wholly detached yourself from him. It is better for both of you. Percival, as you know, has returned to the man with whom he resided when his health was delicate. This man—Warren—is getting advanced in life, and wants a helper in his business. Percival, I have no doubt, will get that appointment, for they are very fond of him—that is, I mean Warren and his daughter are very fond of him.'

'Mr. Warren has a daughter, then?' Sophia asked.

'Yes, he is a widower, and she is his only child. I think—indeed, I know—that she was rather soft on Percy when he lived there. In fact, one or two rather unnecessary letters followed

him to England. I laughed then; *now* I cannot but think that if Percival manages the business well, and gets into the old man's good books, and—and marries little Bessie, as he used to call her—'

'He called her little Bessie, did he?' Sophia inquired.

'Little Bessie—that was the name,' the Rector answered.

'He always called her that. It meant nothing, of course. You see, they were a great deal together, and Percival says that in the Colonies people are not so stiff as we are in England. He used to say he liked Colonial manners. Well, to return—if he marries Bessie it might be a nice thing for him. Indeed, it will be his solitary chance in life.'

It was a sore, an aching heart that lay in Sophia's gentle breast as she and her mother drove home. The poor girl had not the smallest suspicion that her mother had arranged all these nice little thunderclaps; but even had she known it, the knowledge could not have blunted the dreadful edge of the Rector's communication. However powerfully her own friends had argued, they could not have affected her as Mr. Brent had done. It seemed as if the father spoke for his son. It sounded like a message from the lover himself, saying 'Let us part.' And in the mists of her fears and doubts the figure of Bessie Warren rose before her, at Percy's side, seeing him day by day, at the head of the household of which he was to be a member, wealthy, and fond of Percy—known to him by a pet familiar name. What chance had she against this fatal Bessie Warren?

Little Mrs. Barbara Temple was no tyrant, and would not have inflicted any useless pain on her daughter. She saw Sophia out of the side of her eyes as they drove home, and marked her misery, and felt really sorry for her; but it was sorrow such as a humane surgeon feels for the shrinking patient on whom he is about to operate: it was all for Sophia's good. These tears would flow, and then be gone; and after the dread and the operation, and the shrinking and the crying, there would be the world—the bright, prosperous world, wealth, fashion, ease, respect—all that station can secure and money can buy. O, no doubt of it! she was acting the part of a wise mother. And so, quenching her last misgiving, Mrs. Barbara Temple made ready for the final, the winning, stroke in her grand matrimonial game.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEFORE BEGINNING WHICH THE READER IS TO GUESS WHETHER SOPHIA SAID YES OR NO, AND THEN READ AND SEE.

MOTHER and daughter sat down to dinner. Sophia's face was full of care ; but by some accident, or by the caprice of Fate, she was beautifully dressed, and looked very charming in her sadness. The beautiful attire was not indeed very surprising, for Sophia gave such particular attention to dress, and was, besides, such a 'colourist,' that I don't suppose she had an unbecoming gown in her whole wardrobe. To-night she wore a dress of pearl gray with a tucker of white lace round the open front, and a garnet brooch, which I suppose she had pinned in by chance ; but it was in the best taste. Indeed, if the poor heart-sick girl had spent two hours at her glass, and dressed herself for rivalry or conquest, she could not have looked more lovely. Just as an accomplished writer when he is thinking least of form will throw off his most finished piece, so Sophia, who was a true mistress of the art of dress, did this evening, when her thoughts were far enough from the toilet, deck herself out in a way which most of all displayed her charms. Mrs. Barbara Temple marked her as she sat.

'When Prendergast comes,' that keen-witted woman said to herself (having arranged that he was to appear accidentally after dinner), 'when Prendergast comes, and sees you, if the sight does not unlock his lips, he is not the man I take him for !'

Perceiving Sophia's melancholy air, the little mother assumed the same herself. She was taciturn, thoughtful, sighed, and in everything reflected her daughter's sadness. This was supreme high art ; it was saying to Sophia, 'If you are heavy at heart, so am I ; I too am facing a great anxiety.' And so effectually did she play her part that, toward the end of dinner, Sophia, rousing herself by an effort, tried to talk cheerfully. Mrs. Barbara felt a thrill of reasonable pride at this recognition of her power as a successful dissembler. Instead of feeling low-spirited she was, in truth, highly excited in view of her approaching triumph. She felt that Sophia was in her hands. The pensive look, timid voice, and downcast eyes, all told one story to her ; the girl had no resistance left. She would accept Prendergast that night.

No sooner had they got into the drawing-room than Mrs. Barbara asked Sophia to sing to her.

'Yes, mamma,' Sophia said, looking at her wistfully. 'I will sing or play or do anything you like.'

This compliant speech meant, and well the mother knew it, 'If you would only use me for your own pleasure, how happy we

both might be!' Mrs. Barbara Temple understood, but did not regard; she was bent on marriage.

Sophia sat down, and began her favourite 'Oft in the stilly Night;' and finely she sang it, the melancholy ditty serving as a vehicle for her own sorrows. Her voice was a powerful contralto, and without at all exerting herself unduly, she was able so to occupy her mother's ear, that Prendergast entered the room unobserved, and was standing beside Mrs. Barbara before she knew it. The little mother gave him a sprightly nod for silent recognition not to disturb the song, and then, slowly turning her eyes from him to Sophia, and fixing them on her, she seemed to say, 'Is she not a woman worth winning?'

And Prendergast met her returning look with a look of his own, full of tender admiration, which conveyed his thought in reply; and just then Sophia, ending her song, saw that Prendergast was behind her. Surprise, and some other emotion, sent over her face the loveliest blush surely that ever woman wore, and it seemed to spread until her neck was touched with its conscious hue. Prendergast read it as an omen that at last she had begun to feel kindly towards him, and he could scarcely speak to her for the pleasure he felt. And Mrs. Barbara Temple, who never in her life made a mistake, was ready to clap her hands.

'She loves him! she loves him!' the little conqueror murmured to herself. 'See what management does! O, what a woman I am!'

Almost before another word was spoken, Mrs. Temple's maid came into the room, and, advancing to her mistress, said,

'Please, ma'am, is the letter ready?'

'What letter, Jones?'

'The letter, ma'am, you said was so very particular, which must go by to-night's post, and which we was to be sure not to forget to ask for.'

This was delivered in recitation style, like something got carefully off by heart.

'Dear me!' exclaimed Mrs. Temple, with uplifted hands. 'How could I have forgotten it! Sophia, my dear, you must entertain Mr. Prendergast for twenty minutes or half an hour. It is an important letter, and will take quite that time to write. How very stupid I have been!'

And without a glance at Prendergast the very stupid woman left the room, but not until she saw Sophia's blush return with deeper glow.

'Ah,' she thought, 'now for a pretty scene! O the merry days when we were young!'

When our little mother returned to the drawing-room, she

saw Prendergast standing alone in the centre of the floor. His look told her nothing; but as she came towards him, he said very earnestly,

'Mrs. Temple, your daughter is an angel!'

Victory! the little mother could have skipped on the carpet for triumph; but recollecting that it would not be business-like to seem too much delighted, she restrained herself, and said,

'I see. She has accepted you.'

'No, she has not.'

'Yes, yes; but that is only a girl's way; virtually she has accepted you, and you know it.'

'Mrs. Temple, she will never marry me.'

'What do you mean?' The shock was great, and Mrs. Temple found it hard to speak.

'Simply that your daughter has explained to me her position and the state of her affections. She has been so kind, so frank, so like all I thought she must be, that I am more in love with her than ever. But I know the truth, and will no longer struggle against it.'

He dropped his head on his breast and said no more, and for nearly a minute even the nimble little tongue and versatile little brain of his hostess were at fault. But she collected her spirits.

'Prendergast,' she said, in a tone that was dry and even contemptuous, 'that is not the way to win a woman like Sophia.'

'Perhaps not,' he answered; 'but it is the only way I can follow.' Even she was for the moment dumb, and he became silent again; but he roused himself, and spoke afresh, 'The fact is, I have been rebuked to-night. Ten years ago I loved a woman something like your daughter, and she died before our marriage. Over her grave I vowed to live for her memory, and that vow I kept until this year. And to-night, as Sophia was speaking to me, it seemed as if my own buried dear one came from her abode of happiness and bade me—'

'Prendergast,' Mrs. Barbara Temple said, with pointed acrimony, 'the bell is near you. Will you ring for tea?'

It will be admitted by everybody that, from Mrs. Temple's point of view, her situation was decidedly irritating. She was angry with Prendergast, and bitterly angry with Sophia. To a plotting planning nature like hers nothing is so vexatious as a failure such as this. She was working for Sophia's good; she had arranged everything so as to insure success; at the last moment Sophia stupidly spoils all! Wicked was the look with which she regarded her daughter, when, after Prendergast's departure, Sophia shyly stole into the room and took her seat at the tea-table. Mrs. Barbara instantly opened fire:

'So, Sophia, Prendergast has proposed to you.'

'Yes, mamma.'

'And you have accepted his offer, of course?'

The little woman put the question in this way, with a kind of concentrated viciousness which made Sophia tremble.

'No, mamma,' the poor girl said, doing what undoubtedly was wisest at the juncture, and breaking into sobs. 'I could not, mamma, I could not marry him!'

'Sophia!' the mother said, rising from her seat and standing before her daughter, 'you are a weak girl. I don't say you have done wrong, but I say you are a weak girl. Weakness, of all things, I hate. Sibyl would not have acted in this way. Caroline would not. You have neither sense nor spirit; and it is mortifying to me to think that the daughter who is least like myself, and least dutiful, is the one with whom I must, I suppose, pass the remainder of my life.'

This was a most unkind speech; but we must remember how bitterly the little woman was disappointed; and we must remember, too, that she did not often lose her temper. Sophia, who might perhaps at another time have defended herself, was really broken down by the succession of the day's excitement, and only sobbed the more. Her mother's last sarcasm had wounded her indeed.

'I don't care for crying,' the mother went on, quite forgetting her better self and her own maxims of self-possession. 'Really, Sophia, if you are so determined to have your own way, have the courage too, and don't stand whimpering there. You can disobey me. You can fly in the face of everybody who cares for you. Then do carry it out. I had rather see you in a passion than as you are. Has anybody injured you? Have you not done as you wish? If you had accepted Prendergast against your will, there would be an excuse for this pettishness and nonsense; but here you have had your own way, and now you must cry over it. It is all weakness—weakness—despicable weakness; and weakness—weakness—weakness,' she repeated the word in successive sallies of annoyance, 'I hate and despise!'

Weak and strong they certainly looked. She with her compact figure braced and erect, her stretched-out hand, her declaiming attitude, her clear resolute voice; Sophia bending like a willow, her face hidden, and one low sob following another in reply to her mother's taunts as they fell on her ear. But before the morning dawned Mrs. Barbara Temple got a lesson which led her to recall her bitter words, and to confess that the strength was not so entirely her own, nor the weakness so entirely her daughter's, as she imagined just now, while she was standing mistress in her own drawing-room.

(To be continued.)

SOMETHING IN THE MATRIMONIAL WAY.

Face intellectual—
Colour and tone—
All the accompaniments
Really home-grown.
Eyes—here I hesitate—
Rather like blue;
Black not an obstacle,
Hazel would do.
Nose of the Grecian type;
Not to seem proud,
Some little latitude
Herein allowed.
Figure that's squeezable—
Plump, but not fat—
Steer clear of scragginess,
Could not stand that.
Quiet and ladylike,
Dresses with taste;
Ankle displayable,
Neat little waist.
Round of home duties, her
Element quite;
Piecrust especially
Warranted light.
Common accomplishments;
But, in a word,
Those of the useful kind
Greatly preferred.
Little bit musical,
Able to sing
Claribel, Gabriel—
That sort of thing.
Chatty and sociable,
Likes a cigar;
Pleasant old people, pa-
Pa and mamma.
Pious, devotional,
Gentle, and kind;
Teach in the Sunday school
If she's a mind.
Lady of such a stamp
Wanting a beau,
Strictly in confidence,
Knows where to go.

ANGLING GOSSIP.

WHEN anglers meet they are fond of angling gossip. They fight their battles over again, and even, I am afraid, add to the number of their slain. I for one can listen until the night grows old to reminiscences of stream and lake coming from the mouth of some veteran angler. There is something in the quiet nature of the sport we revere which awakes the observant character of the man. Unknown to himself though it may be, yet the active life of Nature in all her moods leaves its impress upon him, so that at some future time, when the chord of recollection is touched, the things which he then felt or saw are expressed in a form which never fails to be interesting. But as the memory of man is a treacherous thing, which will not work when summoned to do so, but only when it chooses, it is necessary to give it a fillip. If I said to any one of my readers, 'Tell me an interesting angling fact,' he would probably not remember any; but if I told him one he would say, 'Ah, that reminds me,' and forthwith tell me something infinitely better. So I thought that if I strung together at random a few of the angling incidents and pictures which were present in my mind, they would act as reminders to jog the memories of my readers to happy recollections.

I have referred to the quiet nature of the sport; but south-country anglers will hardly understand what I mean by quiet and loneliness, unless they have fished some moorland stream where one must be alone in order to fish it

successfully. In Norfolk a party of us sit in a boat, and are sociably happy. On smaller rivers companions separate on arriving at the waterside, and fish different ways, in order to avoid interfering with each other. All day long you may not see another person, or hear any voice but that of the stream, until you meet your friend at some appointed spot, or at the inn. This lonely sort of angling has been that which I have chiefly followed, and I have grown very fond of it. There is something of the same charm in it that there is in single-handed sailing. One's own skill and strength are all that one has to rely on, and the knowledge of this gives to all sport an infinite zest.

For the variety and excellency of its angling, the Trent is not to be surpassed. The Nottingham style of bottom-fishing is far before that of any other locality. It is reduced to a science of exceeding profundity to the outsider, but is simple enough when once mastered. The first distinctive peculiarity of the Nottingham tackle is the reel, which is a simple wooden pirn, revolving at the slightest touch. The line which such a reel contains is made of twisted or plaited silk, undressed, and of astonishing fineness. For pike-fishing a plaited line of fifty yards in length should not weigh more than three-quarters of an ounce. I tested the strength of such a line the other day, not a new line, but one well used. It broke at a dead strain of nine pounds. With proper care and a good rod no pike that swims could

break it. For roach the line is exasperatingly fine. One hundred yards of it should weigh about two drachms and a half. The breaking strength of a used line was, we found, six and a half pounds. The rod has upright rings, and the line is thrown out from the reel. One can easily understand how a long cast may be made with a heavy pike bait; but it is not so easy to understand how a light roach-float and bait can be cast a considerable distance. Yet it can. It is merely a question of knack. A quick swing or twitch of the rod, and away goes the bait, the reel being prevented from over-running itself by the little finger being kept lightly touching it. Then, as the Nottingham motto is, 'fine and far off,' the float is allowed to glide down with the stream, taking the gossamer line off the reel as it does so, until a great distance is achieved. As some of the holes in the Trent are of great depth, one at Dunham Dubbs being thirty feet deep, it is obvious that it is impossible to fish them with the ordinary float, as if it were set to that depth it would stop the line from being reeled in. Therefore a sliding float is adopted. This is a float made with rings at each end, through which the line freely passes. At the requisite depth on the line, a small noose is made, and a bit of line is doubled two or three times and inserted in the noose, which is then drawn tight. This passes freely through the rings on the rod, but will not pass through the top ring of the float. When the cast is made the float rests against the shot or plummet; when it reaches the water the float remains on the surface, while the weighted line runs down until it is arrested by the knot. When you strike a fish you have not the weight of the float to lift, and

when you are landing one you can reel the line right up, while the float slips down to the plummet.

In the thirty feet hole I have mentioned, one day's sport consisted of seven stone weight of carp-bream, weighing from two to five pounds each, not one of which could have been caught with the ordinary tackle. It might be adapted to pike fishing with a live bait in deep water. One could throw further if the float at the moment of casting was close to the lead. It would only be necessary to have the line to run through the float, and a bit of indiarubber ring tied on the line above would pass through the rings when casting, and keep the float in its place when on the water. The barbel is one of the chief sporting fish in the Trent, and grows to a large size. A friend had some good sport amongst them. One day the take was twenty-nine, another day twenty-one, and another nine—all large fish, the largest being eight and a half pounds. The place where they were caught was a pool in the river, across which a large tree had fallen; and under the trunk of this tree the baits were allowed to float, the line rubbing against the tree when the fish were hooked. Once the line caught in the bark and broke above the float, which was afterwards seen bobbing about. Another line was thrown across it; it was hooked and recovered with a barbel still on the hook. Incidents similar to this occur to every angler. The hooks used by the Nottingham anglers for barbel are also peculiar, in that a loop of silk is whipped on to them, and the gut is fastened to that loop by another loop. The hook is therefore easily removable if blunted or bent, without sacrificing the gut. Also, as the silk loop permits free motion of the

hook, the gut is not worn out at the head of the shank. The worm is drawn clean over the loops. The hands are dipped in dry sand to make the handling of the worm easy. By the way, worms must be unusually plentiful in the valley of the Trent. Each angler takes with him from one to two thousand worms for bait and ground bait for a day's fishing. And now we leave the Trent for a district where coarse fish are not deemed fish at all, but only enemies to be got rid of in favour of trout and salmon.

Reverting to my much-beloved trout, there are more ways of fishing for him than I have time to enumerate. I will ask your attention, however, while I describe one or two. Daping or dlobbering with the natural fly is often successful, particularly the improvement upon it known as floss-silk line fishing, or blow-line fishing. You fasten a line of the lightest floss-silk obtainable, consistent with the necessary strength, to your reel line. Your hook is small and fine in the wire, and is tied on the finest drawn gut. Your rod should be long and pliant. Your bait is some natural fly, a May-fly for choice. Thus armed you go to the windward side of the river or lake, and let your gossamer line float out on the breeze, so that the fly just keeps touching the water in front of you. A slight lift of the rod top will lift the fly off the water and set it on its travels again. In lake fishing from a boat, this is a very deadly method. You watch where a trout is rising, and let the fly touch just above him. In the May-fly season, the cream of the sport may be had in this way. In Norfolk the advent of the May-fly is unnoticed and uncared for; but in trout-fishing districts men watch

eagerly during May and June for its appearance, for they know that the trout are watching for it even more eagerly, and that when the tempting flies are floating down the river, all the trout are possessed with a desire to eat them.

A trout stream with the May-fly on is a sight to see. In the south of England the trout are much larger, much shyer, and much less numerous than they are in the north. These great fat southern trout are wonderfully well worth catching. They know a thing or two, however, and it is very difficult to catch them. Often have I watched very large ones in the lanes between the weeds of some Hampshire stream. As each fly or other object floats down the stream, they rise leisurely and inspect it; and if satisfied of its harmlessness, they suck it in. As a general rule, the ordinary method of fly-fishing with wet flies is of no avail. A dry fly must be used. Only one is put on the cast; and after each throw it is whisked to and fro through the air to dry it, so that when it falls on the water it floats dry and upright. A rising fish is duly 'spotted,' and the angler sets himself to outwit it, creeping on hands and knees through the lush meadow grass, and casting as if his life depended on the cast.

Of fishing for the Thames trout—that rarest of fish—I have no practical experience; but men spin day after day, and month after month, with an extraordinary patience, and without success or much apparent hope of it. The most deadly contrivance of all both for salmon and trout-fishing is one which is happily now illegal. I refer to the lath or otter. This consists of a board about two feet long, three inches wide, and half an inch thick, jointed in the middle so as to fold

for convenience of stowing. One edge of this is weighted with lead or iron, so that it will just float on edge in the water. A strong line is fastened to this lath by means of a bridle rigged like that on a kite, and a strong stick or rod with a large pinn for the line to tow the lath. The latter sheers out as you walk or row along to any distance. At intervals along the line shorter lines with flies attached are suspended, and these comb the water. I have seen the same plan used for pike on some of the Cumberland tarns, and most deadly it was. Instead of flies, artificial baits were suspended from the line. Another dodge I have seen the miners use in Cumberland is to tie lines and spinning baits to rude toy-boats, and set them to sail across the lake.

Fly-fishing for pike I have known to be practised with great success, particularly in water not more than three feet in depth. A salmon rod and line, a twisted gut trace, and a huge gaudy fly made of corks to float it, red wool and brightly coloured feathers to make it look like some bird, and two or three triangles to do the needful hooking. The fly floats; therefore it can be worked over weeds where spinning or live baiting would be impossible. Pike of all sizes take this fly freely in the north-country tarns, and I do not see why they should not do so in Norfolk. The fly would be a change from the too common roach, which the pike see every day. The most successful baits I have ever used for pike were gold-fish. Near Newcastle-on-Tyne was a pool fed with warm water from certain factories. The gold-fish literally swarmed in this pool, and were of all sizes, up to two pounds in weight. A dozen fish were put in a few years ago, and had increased to such a marvellous

extent that once lately, when water too hot had been allowed to flow in, and some of the fish were scalded to death, a barrow-load was taken away without making any perceptible difference in their number. The owner used to fish for them with a cormorant. It was a pretty sight to see the pool on a fine day. The surface was quite golden with the fish, so thickly were they grouped together. As you drew near, however, they sank down out of sight. We used to catch a few with a casting-net, but most with roach tackle and paste for bait. They played vigorously, and gave a good deal of sport. Most of them were too large for bait for the pike of the size found in northern rivers, and out of a score of fish only five or six would be small enough. However badly the pike were on the feed, they would not refuse live gold-fish, and I have used them successfully when the water has been thick with mud during a spate. It would be well worth the while of two or three of our ardent pike fishers to unite together and get a barrelful of gold-fish brought over and consigned to some small pool for stowage during the winter season. The next most killing bait for pike, as far as my experience has gone, is the eel-tail bait. About nine inches of the tail-end of an eel is cut off; then the skin is drawn back for four inches and sewn down, the exposed flesh being cut away and the skin secured by a string tied round at the point which forms the head. The bait is all the better for being kept in salt, which gives the turned back skin a blueish tint. It may be used with any kind of spinning tackle, and is so tough that one bait will last all day.

I had two days' pike-fishing in Shropshire a year ago which may

be worth mentioning. The first day I went in response to an invitation, armed of course with my rod and a large tin of live bait. To my horror, when we drove up to the place, we saw an array of keepers and watchers armed with nets, and a number of neighbours to see the fun. It appeared that the owners of the river wished to exterminate the pike for the sake of the trout. Well, we dragged about three miles of canal-like river in the following way. A trammel net, long enough to reach from bank to bank, was dragged steadily along by men on both banks. Another net followed about twenty yards behind. The point about this worth noticing was this—that the fish when disturbed all made up stream. They would dash time after time at the net, try to jump it, get under it, or creep by at the sides, but never thought of darting back. There was nothing down stream then to stop them, and if they had chosen they could have swam away free and unhindered, and at a leisurely pace; but no, up stream they would go, and the second net actually caught more fish than the first. We caught a tremendous lot of pike, roach, and dace; but I much regretted the necessity of the proceeding. The other day I alluded to, we went to a pool which is strictly preserved and full of pike. When we got there the boat was locked up, and the keeper was nowhere to be found. Near the banks, the pool was shallow and weedy. It was choked up by that American pest the *Anacharis*, with clear spaces here and there. We tried live baiting with the bait eight inches from the float. In a hopeless manner we fished until half-past two without a run. The water was very clear, and no sign of a fish could be seen. Then, as if by magic,

every little clear place was tenanted by a pike. The suddenness of their appearance was remarkable. They came on the feed, and in an hour and a half I myself had six fish from six to nine pounds each. Then they went off the feed, and there was not a fish visible anywhere, though the water was like glass.

Fond as I am of sport, I yet think it should not take precedence of some methods which the professional fishermen uses with the result of furnishing food to the people and a livelihood to himself. Salmon-netting is legalised, and it is in fact necessary; but the salmon is food for the upper and middle classes only. Now the eel is an admirable item of food which should be available to the lower classes. The Norfolk rivers would furnish an inexhaustible supply if it were properly sought for, and much cheap and good food for the people would be the result. Now a good many anglers object to the eel-sets, because they are said to catch other fish besides eels. Now if you will bear in mind the fact I ascertained in my pike-netting expedition, that fish always strike up stream when alarmed by the net, you will perhaps agree with me that they are not likely to float down into the pocket of an eel-net with the wide mouth open up stream for them. I have made careful inquiries on the rivers, and find that while fish are sometimes caught in these nets, the numbers of fish so caught are comparatively small; and you must remember this: that, putting aside another consideration I shall presently allude to, the number of fish so caught and not returned to the water would, even if the eel-sets were multiplied many times, not make one per cent difference to the angler's sport, and I think

no one would grudge one fish out of the hundred he may catch and throw away for the sake of increasing a good and cheap food supply. But I firmly believe that the eel-sets are a great benefit to the angler. It must be remembered that no fish is so destructive to other fish as the eel. Where the pike eats its tens of fish, the eel eats its tens of thousands of fish in the shape of spawn; and the more the eels in the river are kept down, the better the angler's sport would be. Therefore, I plead that in any further legislation affecting southern waters the following points should be kept in mind:

1. That there is an abundant harvest of good food in our waters

which is not only now wasted, but is in itself injurious to our sport by being left in the water.

2. That with proper encouragement the industry of eel-catching could be exercised so as to be a benefit to the poorer classes of the community in providing them with cheap food, and a benefit to anglers by removing the destroyers of fish.

3. That the use of eel-nets or other instruments for catching eels, including nightlines, should be permitted under regulations which should provide for the granting of licenses at small charges, and the periodical inspection of the fishing establishments.

G. CHRISTOPHER DAVIES.

APRIL FOOLS.

WHAT can we gather
Fairest to-day ?
Yellow-faced blossoms
Smiling and gay,
These shall we scatter
Over Spring's way ?

April was ever
Chance's poor tool ;
Showers and sunshine
Laugh at his rule :
Man was a monkey,
Now he's a fool !

Twitter of birdlings
Heedlessly wed
Puts all slow music
Out of our head ;
Whistle and caper—
Winter is dead !

Head over heels, O,
Turn if you can ;
Be for once merry,
Pipe with old Pan ;
Laugh like an elf, don't
Groan like a man !

A. NORMAN POHUR.

BONES,

The April Fool of Harvey's Sluice.

ABE DURTON's cabin was not beautiful. People have been heard to assert that it was ugly, and, even after the fashion of Harvey's Sluice, have gone the length of prefixing their adjective with a forcible expletive which emphasised their criticism. Abe, however, was a stolid and easy-going man, on whose mind the remarks of an unappreciative public made but little impression. He had built the house himself, and it suited his partner and him, and what more did they want? Indeed he was rather touchy upon the subject. 'Though I says it as raised it,' he remarked, 'it'll lay over any shanty in the valley. Holes? Well, of course there are holes. You wouldn't get fresh air without holes. There's nothing stuffy about my house. Rain? Well, if it does let the rain in, ain't it an advantage to know its rainin' without gettin' up to unbar the door. I wouldn't own a house that didn't leak some. As to its bein' off the perpendic'lar, I like a house with a bit of a tilt. Anyways it pleases my pard, Boss Morgan, and what's good enough for him is good enough for you, I suppose.' At which approach to personalities his antagonist usually sheered off, and left the honours of the field to the indignant architect.

But whatever difference of opinion might exist as to the beauty of the establishment, there could be no question as to its utility. To the tired wayfarer, plodding along the Buckhurst

road in the direction of the Sluice, the warm glow upon the summit of the hill was a beacon of hope and of comfort. Those very holes at which the neighbours sneered helped to diffuse a cheery atmosphere of light around, which was doubly acceptable on such a night as the present.

There was only one man inside the hut, and that was the proprietor, Abe Durton himself, or 'Bones,' as he had been christened with the rude heraldry of the camp. He was sitting in front of the great wood fire, gazing moodily into its glowing depths, and occasionally giving a faggot a kick of remonstrance when it showed any indication of dying into a smoulder. His fair Saxon face, with its bold simple eyes and crisp yellow beard, stood out sharp and clear against the darkness as the flickering light played over it. It was a manly resolute countenance, and yet the physiognomist might have detected something in the lines of the mouth which showed a weakness somewhere, an indecision which contrasted strangely with his herculean shoulders and massive limbs. Abe's was one of those trusting simple natures which are as easy to lead as they are impossible to drive; and it was this happy pliability of disposition which made him at once the butt and the favourite of the dwellers in the Sluice. Badinage in that primitive settlement was of a somewhat ponderous character, yet no amount of chaff had ever

brought a dark look on Bones's face, or an unkind thought into his honest heart. It was only when his aristocratic partner was, as he thought, being put upon, that an ominous tightness about his lower lip and an angry light in his blue eyes caused even the most irrepressible humorist in the colony to nip his favourite joke in the bud, in order to diverge into an earnest and all-absorbing dissertation upon the state of the weather.

'The Boss is late to-night,' he muttered as he rose from his chair and stretched himself in a colossal yawn. 'My stars, how it does rain and blow! Don't it, Blinky?' Blinky was a demure and meditative owl, whose comfort and welfare was a chronic subject of solicitude to its master, and who at present contemplated him gravely from one of the rafters. 'Pity you can't speak, Blinky,' continued Abe, glancing up at his feathered companion. 'There's a powerful deal of sense in your face. Kinder melancholy too. Crossed in love, maybe, when you was young. Talkin' of love,' he added, 'I've not seen Susan to-day;' and lighting the candle which stood in a black bottle upon the table, he walked across the room and peered earnestly at one of the many pictures from stray illustrated papers, which had been cut out by the occupants and posted up upon the walls.

The particular picture which attracted him was one which represented a very tawdrily-dressed actress simpering over a bouquet at an imaginary audience. This sketch had, for some inscrutable reason, made a deep impression upon the susceptible heart of the miner. He had invested the young lady with a human interest by solemnly, and without the slightest warrant, christening her as

Susan Banks, and had then installed her as his standard of female beauty.

'You see my Susan,' he would say, when some wanderer from Buckhurst, or even from Melbourne, would describe some fair Circe whom he had left behind him. 'There ain't a girl like my Sue. If ever you go to the old country again, just you ask to see her. Susan Banks is her name, and I've got her picture up at the shanty.'

Abe was still gazing at his charmer when the rough door was flung open, and a blinding cloud of sleet and rain came driving into the cabin, almost obscuring for the moment a young man who sprang in and proceeded to bar the entrance behind him, an operation which the force of the wind rendered no easy matter. He might have passed for the genius of the storm, with the water dripping from his long hair and running down his pale refined face.

'Well,' he said, in a slightly peevish voice, 'haven't you got any supper?'

'Waiting and ready,' said his companion cheerily, pointing to a large pot which bubbled by the side of the fire. 'You seem sort of damp.'

'Damp be hanged! I'm soaked, man, thoroughly saturated. It's a night that I wouldn't have a dog out, at least not a dog that I had any respect for. Hand over that dry coat from the peg.'

Jack Morgan, or Boss, as he was usually called, belonged to a type which was commoner in the mines during the flush times of the first great rush than would be supposed. He was a man of good blood, liberally educated, and a graduate of an English university. Boss should, in the natural course of things, have been an energetic

curate, or struggling professional man, had not some latent traits cropped out in his character, inherited possibly from old Sir Henry Morgan, who had founded the family with Spanish pieces of eight gallantly won upon the high seas. It was this wild strain of blood no doubt which had caused him to drop from the bedroom-window of the ivy-clad English parsonage, and leave home and friends behind him, to try his luck with pick and shovel in the Australian fields. In spite of his effeminate face and dainty manners, the rough dwellers in Harvey's Sluice had gradually learned that the little man was possessed of a cool courage and unflinching resolution, which won respect in a community where pluck was looked upon as the highest of human attributes. No one ever knew how it was that Bones and he had become partners; yet partners they were, and the large simple nature of the stronger man looked with an almost superstitious reverence upon the clear decisive mind of his companion.

'That's better,' said the Boss, as he dropped into the vacant chair before the fire and watched Abe laying out the two metal plates, with the horn-handled knives and abnormally pronged forks. 'Take your mining boots off, Bones; there's no use filling the cabin with red clay. Come here and sit down.'

His gigantic partner came meekly over and perched himself upon the top of a barrel.

'What's up?' he asked.

'Shares are up,' said his companion. 'That's what's up. Look here,' and he extracted a crumpled paper from the pocket of the steaming coat. 'Here's the *Buckhurst Sentinel*. Read this article—this one here about a paying lead in the Conemara mine. We

hold pretty heavily in that concern, my boy. We might sell out to-day and clear something—but I think we'll hold on.'

Abe Durton in the mean time was laboriously spelling out the article in question, following the lines with his great forefinger, and muttering under his tawny moustache.

'Two hundred dollars a foot,' he said, looking up. 'Why, pard, we hold a hundred feet each. It would give us twenty thousand dollars! We might go home on that.'

'Nonsense!' said his companion; 'we've come out here for something better than a beggarly couple of thousand pounds. The thing is bound to pay. Sinclair the assayer has been over there, and says there's a ledge of the richest quartz he ever set eyes on. It is just a case of getting the machinery to crush it. By the way, what was to-day's take like?'

Abe extracted a small wooden box from his pocket and handed it to his comrade. It contained what appeared to be about a teaspoonful of sand and one or two little metallic granules not larger than a pea. Boss Morgan laughed, and returned it to his companion.

'We sha'n't make our fortune at that rate, Bones,' he remarked; and there was a pause in the conversation as the two men listened to the wind as it screamed and whistled past the little cabin.

'Any news from Buckhurst?' asked Abe, rising and proceeding to extract their supper from the pot.

'Nothing much,' said his companion. 'Cock-eyed Joe has been shot by Billy Reid in McFarlane's Store.'

'Ah,' said Abe, with listless interest.

'Bushrangers have been around and stuck up the Rochdale station.

They say they are coming over here.'

The miner whistled as he poured some whisky into a jug.

'Anything more?' he asked.

'Nothing of importance except that the blacks have been showing a bit down New Sterling way, and that the assayer has bought a piano and is going to have his daughter out from Melbourne to live in the new house opposite on the other side of the road. So you see we are going to have something to look at, my boy,' he added as he sat down, and began attacking the food set before him. 'They say she is a beauty, Bones.'

'She won't be a patch on my Sue,' returned the other decisively.

His partner smiled as he glanced round at the flaring print upon the wall. Suddenly he dropped his knife and seemed to listen. Amid the wild uproar of the wind and the rain there was a low rumbling sound which was evidently not dependent upon the elements.

'What's that?'

'Darned if I know.'

The two men made for the door and peered out earnestly into the darkness. Far away along the Buckhurst road they could see a moving light, and the dull sound was louder than before.

'It's a buggy coming down,' said Abe.

'Where is it going to?'

'Don't know. Across the ford, I s'pose.'

'Why, man, the ford will be six feet deep to-night, and running like a mill-stream.'

The light was nearer now, coming rapidly round the curve of the road. There was a wild sound of galloping with the rattle of the wheels.

'Horses have bolted, by thunder!'

'Bad job for the man inside.'

There was a rough individuality about the inhabitants of Harvey's Sluice, in virtue of which every man bore his misfortunes upon his own shoulders, and had very little sympathy for those of his neighbours. The predominant feeling of the two men was one of pure curiosity as they watched the swinging swaying lanterns coming down the winding road.

'If he don't pull 'em up before they reach the ford he's a goner,' remarked Abe Durton resignedly.

Suddenly there came a lull in the sullen splash of the rain. It was but for a moment, but in that moment there came down on the breeze a long cry which caused the two men to start and stare at each other, and then to rush frantically down the steep incline towards the road below.

'A woman, by Heaven!' gasped Abe, as he sprang across the gaping shaft of a mine in the recklessness of his haste.

Morgan was the lighter and more active man. He drew away rapidly from his stalwart companion. Within a minute he was standing panting and bare-headed in the middle of the soft muddy road, while his partner was still toiling down the side of the declivity.

The carriage was close on him now. He could see in the light of the lamps the raw-boned Australian horse as, terrified by the storm and by its own clatter, it came tearing down the declivity which led to the ford. The man who was driving seemed to see the pale set face in the pathway in front of him, for he yelled out some incoherent words of warning, and made a last desperate attempt to pull up. There was a shout, an oath, and a jarring crash, and Abe, hurrying down, saw a wild infuriated horse rearing madly in the air with a slim

dark figure hanging on to its bridle. Boss, with the keen power of calculation which had made him the finest cricketer at Rugby in his day, had caught the rein immediately below the bit, and clung to it with silent concentration. Once he was down with a heavy thud in the roadway as the horse jerked its head violently forwards, but when, with a snort of exultation, the animal pressed on, it was only to find that the prostrate man beneath its forehoofs still maintained his unyielding grasp.

'Hold it, Bones,' he said, as a tall figure hurled itself into the road and seized the other rein.

'All right, old man, I've got him,' and the horse, cowed by the sight of a fresh assailant, quieted down, and stood shivering with terror. 'Get up, Boss, it's safe now.'

But poor Boss lay groaning in the mud.

'I can't do it, Bones.' There was a catch in the voice as of pain. 'There's something wrong, old chap, but don't make a fuss. It's only a shake; give me a lift up.'

Abe bent tenderly over his prostrate companion. He could see that he was very white, and breathing with difficulty.

'Cheer up, old Boss,' he murmured. 'Hullo! my stars!'

The last two exclamations were shot out of the honest miner's bosom as if they were impelled by some irresistible force, and he took a couple of steps backward in sheer amazement. There at the other side of the fallen man, and half shrouded in the darkness, stood what appeared to Abe's simple soul to be the most beautiful vision that ever had appeared upon earth. To eyes accustomed to rest upon nothing more captivating than the ruddy faces and rough beards of the miners in the

Sluice, it seemed that that fair delicate countenance must belong to a wanderer from some better world. Abe gazed at it with a wondering reverence, oblivious for the moment even of his injured friend upon the ground.

'O papa,' said the apparition, in great distress, 'he is hurt, the gentleman is hurt;' and with a quick feminine gesture of sympathy, she bent her lithe figure over Boss Morgan's prostrate figure.

'Why, it's Abe Durton and his partner,' said the driver of the buggy, coming forward and disclosing the grizzled features of Mr. Joshua Sinclair, the assayer to the mines. 'I don't know how to thank you, boys. The infernal brute got the bit between his teeth, and I should have had to have thrown Carrie out and chanced it in another minute. That's right,' he continued, as Morgan staggered to his feet. 'Not much hurt, I hope.'

'I can get up to the hut now,' said the young man, steadying himself upon his partner's shoulder. 'How are you going to get Miss Sinclair home?'

'O, we can walk,' said that young lady, shaking off the effects of her fright with all the elasticity of youth.

'We can drive and take the road round the bank so as to avoid the ford,' said her father. 'The horse seems cowed enough now; you need not be afraid of it, Carrie. I hope we shall see you at the house, both of you. Neither of us can easily forget this night's work.'

Miss Carrie said nothing, but she managed to shoot a little demure glance of gratitude from under her long lashes, to have won which honest Abe felt that he would have cheerfully undertaken to stop a runaway locomotive.

There was a cheery shout of 'Good-night,' a crack of the whip, and the buggy rattled away in the darkness.

'You told me the men were rough and nasty, pa,' said Miss Carrie Sinclair, after a long silence, when the two dark shadows had died away in the distance, and the carriage was speeding along by the turbulent stream. 'I don't think so. I think they are very nice.' And Carrie was unusually quiet for the remainder of her journey, and seemed more reconciled to the hardship of leaving her dear friend Amelia in the far-off boarding school at Melbourne.

That did not prevent her from writing a full, true, and particular account of their little adventure to the same young lady upon that very night.

'They stopped the horse, darling, and one poor fellow was hurt. And O, Amy, if you had seen the other one in a red shirt, with a pistol at his waist! I couldn't help thinking of you, dear. He was just your idea. You remember, a yellow moustache and great blue eyes. And how he did stare at poor me! You never see such men in Burke-street, Amy;' and so on, for four pages of pretty feminine gossip.

In the mean time poor Boss, badly shaken, had been helped up the hill by his partner and regained the shelter of the shanty. Abe doctored him out of the rude pharmacopoeia of the camp, and bandaged up his strained arm. Both were men of few words, and neither made any allusion to what had taken place. It was noticed, however, by Blinky that his master failed to pay his usual nightly orisons before the shrine of Susan Banks. Whether this sagacious fowl drew any deductions from this, and from the fact that Bones sat long and earnestly smoking

by the smouldering fire, I know not. Suffice it that as the candle died away and the miner rose from his chair, his feathered friend flew down upon his shoulder, and was only prevented from giving vent to a sympathetic hoot by Abe's warning finger, and its own strong inherent sense of propriety.

A casual visitor dropping into the straggling township of Harvey's Sluice shortly after Miss Carrie Sinclair's arrival would have noticed a considerable alteration in the manners and customs of its inhabitants. Whether it was the refining influence of a woman's presence, or whether it sprang from an emulation excited by the brilliant appearance of Abe Durton, it is hard to say—probably from a blending of the two. Certain it is that that young man had suddenly developed an affection for cleanliness and a regard for the conventionalities of civilisation, which aroused the astonishment and ridicule of his companions. That Boss Morgan should pay attention to his personal appearance had long been set down as a curious and inexplicable phenomenon, depending upon early education; but that loose-limbed easy-going Bones should flaunt about in a clean shirt was regarded by every grimy denizen of the Sluice as a direct and premeditated insult. In self-defence, therefore, there was a general cleaning up after working hours, and such a run upon the grocery establishment, that soap went up to an unprecedented figure, and a fresh consignment had to be ordered from McFarlane's store in Buckhurst.

'Is this here a free minin' camp, or is it a darned Sunday-school?' had been the indignant query of Long McCoy, a promi-

nent member of the reactionary party, who had failed to advance with the times, having been absent during the period of regeneration. But his remonstrance met with but little sympathy; and at the end of a couple of days a general turbidity of the creek announced his surrender, which was confirmed by his appearance in the Colonial Bar with a shining and bashful face, and hair which was redolent of bear's grease.

'I felt kinder lonesome,' he remarked apologetically, 'so I thought as I'd have a look what was under the clay;' and he viewed himself approvingly in the cracked mirror which graced the select room of the establishment.

Our casual visitor would have noticed a remarkable change also in the conversation of the community. Somehow, when a certain dainty little bonnet with a sweet girlish figure beneath it was seen in the distance among the disused shafts and mounds of red earth which disfigured the sides of the valley, there was a warning murmur, and a general clearing off of the cloud of blasphemy, which was, I regret to state, an habitual characteristic of the working population of Harvey's Sluice. Such things only need a beginning; and it was noticeable that long after Miss Sinclair had vanished from sight there was a decided rise in the moral barometer of the gulches. Men found by experience that their stock of adjectives was less limited than they had been accustomed to suppose, and that the less forcible were sometimes even more adapted for conveying their meaning.

Abe had formerly been considered one of the most experienced valuers of an ore in the settlement. It had been commonly supposed that he was able to estimate the amount of gold in

a fragment of quartz with remarkable exactness. This, however, was evidently a mistake, otherwise he would never have incurred the useless expense of having so many worthless specimens assayed as he now did. Mr. Joshua Sinclair found himself inundated with such a flood of fragments of mica, and lumps of rock containing decimal percentages of the precious metals, that he began to form a very low opinion of the young man's mining capabilities. It is even asserted that Abe shuffled up to the house one morning with a hopeful smile, and, after some fumbling, produced half a brick from the bosom of his jersey, with the stereotyped remark 'that he thought he'd struck it at last, and so had dropped in to ask him to cipher out an estimate.' As this anecdote rests, however, upon the unsupported evidence of Jim Struggles, the humorist of the camp, there may be some slight inaccuracy of detail.

It is certain that what with professional business in the morning and social visits at night, the tall figure of the miner was a familiar object in the little drawing room of Azalea Villa, as the new house of the assayer had been magniloquently named. He seldom ventured upon a remark in the presence of its female occupant; but would sit on the extreme edge of his chair in a state of speechless admiration while she rattled off some lively air upon the newly-imported piano. Many were the strange and unexpected places in which his feet turned up. Miss Carrie had gradually come to the conclusion that they were entirely independent of his body, and had ceased to speculate upon the manner in which she would trip over them on one side of the table while the blushing

owner was apologising from the other. There was only one cloud on honest Bones's mental horizon, and that was the periodical appearance of Black Tom Ferguson, of Rochdale Ferry. This clever young scamp had managed to ingratiate himself with old Joshua, and was a constant visitor at the villa. There were evil rumours abroad about Black Tom. He was known to be a gambler, and shrewdly suspected to be worse. Harvey's Sluice was not censorious, and yet there was a general feeling that Ferguson was a man to be avoided. There was a reckless *élan* about his bearing, however, and a sparkle in his conversation, which had an indescribable charm, and even induced the Boss, who was particular in such matters, to cultivate his acquaintance while forming a correct estimate of his character. Miss Carrie seemed to hail his appearance as a relief, and chattered away for hours about books and music and the gaieties of Melbourne. It was on these occasions that poor simple Bones would sink into the very lowest depths of despondency, and either sink away, or sit glaring at his rival with an earnest malignancy which seemed to cause that gentleman no small amusement.

The miner made no secret to his partner of the admiration which he entertained for Miss Sinclair. If he was silent in her company, he was voluble enough when she was the subject of discourse. Loiterers upon the Buckhurst-road might have heard a stentorian voice upon the hill-side bellowing forth a vocabulary of female charms. He submitted his difficulties to the superior intelligence of the Boss.

'That loafer from Rochdale,' he said, 'he seems to reel it off kinder nat'ral, while for the life

of me I can't say a word. Tell me, Boss, what would *you* say to a girl like that?'

'Why, talk about what would interest her,' said his companion.

'Ah, that's where it lies.'

'Talk about the customs of the place and the country,' said the Boss, pulling meditatively at his pipe. 'Tell her stories of what you have seen in the mines, and that sort of thing.'

'Eh? You'd do that, would you?' responded his comrade more hopefully. 'If that's the hang of it I am right. I'll go up now and tell her about Chicago Bill, an' how he put them two bullets in the man from the bend the night of the dance.'

Boss Morgan laughed.

'That's hardly the thing,' he said. 'You'd frighten her if you told her that. Tell her something lighter, you know; something to amuse her, something funny.'

'Funny?' said the anxious lover, with less confidence in his voice. 'How you and me made Mat Houlahan drunk and put him in the pulpit of the Baptist church, and he wouldn't let the preacher in in the morning. How would that do, eh?'

'For Heaven's sake don't say anything of the sort,' said his Mentor, in great consternation. 'She'd never speak to either of us again. No, what I mean is that you should tell about the habits of the mines, how men live and work and die there. If she is a sensible girl that ought to interest her.'

'How they live at the mines? Pard, you are good to me. How they live? There's a thing I can talk of as glib as Black Tom or any man. I'll try it on her when I see her.'

'By the way,' said his partner listlessly, 'just keep an eye on that man Ferguson. His hands

arn't very clean, you know, and he's not scrupulous when he is aiming for anything. You remember how Dick Williams, of English Town, was found dead in the bush. Of course it was rangers that did it. They do say, however, that Black Tom owed him a deal more money than he could ever have paid. There's been one or two queer things about him. Keep your eye on him, Abe. Watch what he does.'

'I will,' said his companion.

And he did. He watched him that very night. Watched him stride out of the house of the assayer with anger and baffled pride on every feature of his handsome swarthy face. Watched him clear the garden paling at a bound, pass in long rapid strides down the side of the valley, gesticulating wildly with his hands, and vanish into the bushland beyond. All this Abe Durton watched, and with a thoughtful look upon his face he relit his pipe and strolled slowly backward to the hut upon the hill.

March was drawing to a close in Harvey's Sluice, and the glare and heat of the antipodean summer had toned down into the rich mellow hues of autumn. It was never a lovely place to look upon. There was something hopelessly prosaic in the two bare rugged ridges, seamed and scarred by the hand of man, with iron arms of windlasses, and broken buckets projecting everywhere through the endless little hillocks of red earth. Down the middle ran the deeply rutted road from Buckhurst, winding along and crossing the sluggish tide of Harper's Creek by a crumbling wooden bridge. Beyond the bridge lay the cluster of little huts with the Colonial Bar and the Grocery towering in all the dignity of

whitewash among the humble dwellings around. The assayer's verandah-lined house lay above the gulches on the side of the slope nearly opposite the dilapidated specimen of architecture of which our friend Abe was so unreasonably proud.

There was one other building which might have come under the category of what an inhabitant of the Sluice would have described as a 'public edifice' with a comprehensive wave of his pipe which conjured up images of an endless vista of colonnades and minarets. This was the Baptist chapel, a modest little shingle-roofed erection on the bend of the river about a mile above the settlement. It was from this that the town looked at its best, when the harsh outlines and crude colours were somewhat softened by distance. On that particular morning the stream looked pretty as it meandered down the valley; pretty, too, was the long rising upland behind, with its luxuriant green covering; and prettiest of all was Miss Carrie Sinclair, as she laid down the basket of ferns which she was carrying, and stopped upon the summit of the rising ground.

Something seemed to be amiss with that young lady. There was a look of anxiety upon her face which contrasted strangely with her usual appearance of piquant insouciance. Some recent annoyance had left its traces upon her. Perhaps it was to walk it off that she had rambled down the valley; certain it is that she inhaled the fresh breezes of the woodlands as if their resinous fragrance bore with them some antidote for human sorrow.

She stood for some time gazing at the view before her. She could see her father's house, like a white dot upon the hillside, though

strangely enough it was a blue reek of smoke upon the opposite slope which seemed to attract the greater part of her attention. She lingered there, watching it with a wistful look in her hazel eyes. Then the loneliness of her situation seemed to strike her, and she felt one of those spasmodic fits of unreasoning terror to which the bravest women are subject. Tales of natives and of bushrangers, their daring and their cruelty, flashed across her. She glanced at the great mysterious stretch of silent bushland beside her, and stooped to pick up her basket with the intention of hurrying along the road in the direction of the gulchea. She started round, and hardly suppressed a scream as a long red-flannelled arm shot out from behind her and withdrew the basket from her very grasp.

The figure which met her eye would to some have seemed little calculated to allay her fears. The high boots, the rough shirt, and the broad girdle with its weapons of death were, however, too familiar to Miss Carrie to be objects of terror; and when above them all she saw a pair of tender blue eyes looking down upon her, and a half-abashed smile lurking under a thick yellow moustache, she knew that for the remainder of that walk ranger and black would be equally powerless to harm her.

'O Mr. Durton,' she said, 'how you did startle me!'

'I'm sorry, miss,' said Abe, in great trepidation at having caused his idol one moment's uneasiness. 'You see,' he continued, with simple cunning, 'the weather bein' fine and my partner gone prospectin', I thought I'd walk up to Hagley's Hill and round back by the bend, and there I sees you accidental-like and promiscuous a-standin' on a hillock.' This astounding falsehood was reeled off

by the miner with great fluency, and an artificial sincerity which at once stamped it as a fabrication. Bones had concocted and rehearsed it while tracking the little footsteps in the clay, and looked upon it as the very depth of human guile. Miss Carrie did not venture upon a remark, but there was a gleam of amusement in her eyes which puzzled her lover.

Abe was in good spirits this morning. It may have been the sunshine, or it may have been the rapid rise of shares in the Conemara, which lightened his heart. I am inclined to think, however, that it was referable to neither of these causes. Simple as he was, the scene which he had witnessed the night before could only lead to one conclusion. He pictured himself walking as wildly down the valley under similar circumstances, and his heart was touched with pity for his rival. He felt very certain that the ill-omened face of Mr. Thomas Ferguson of Rochdale Ferry would never more be seen within the walls of Azalea Villa. Then why did she refuse him? He was handsome, he was fairly rich. Could it—? no, it couldn't; of course it couldn't; how could it! The idea was ridiculous—so very ridiculous that it had fermented in the young man's brain all night, and that he could do nothing but ponder over it in the morning, and cherish it in his perturbed bosom.

They passed down the red pathway together, and along by the river's bank. Abe had relapsed into his normal condition of taciturnity. He had made one gallant effort to hold forth upon the subject of ferns, stimulated by the basket which he held in his hand, but the theme was not a thrilling one, and after a spasmodic

flicker he had abandoned the attempt. While coming along he had been full of racy anecdotes and humorous observations. He had rehearsed innumerable remarks which were to be poured into Miss Sinclair's appreciative ear. But now his brain seemed of a sudden to have become a vacuum, and utterly devoid of any idea save an insane and overpowering impulse to comment upon the heat of the sun. No astronomer who ever reckoned a parallax was so entirely absorbed in the condition of the celestial bodies as honest Bones while he trudged along by the slow-flowing Australian river.

Suddenly his conversation with his partner came back into his mind. What was it Boss had said upon the subject? 'Tell her how they live at the mines.' He revolved it in his brain. It seemed a curious thing to talk about; but Boss had said it, and Boss was always right. He would take the plunge; so with a premonitory hem he blurted out,

'They live mostly on bacon and beans in the valley.'

He could not see what effect this communication had upon his companion. He was too tall to be able to peer under the little straw bonnet. She did not answer. He would try again.

'Mutton on Sundays,' he said.

Even this failed to arouse any enthusiasm. In fact she seemed to be laughing. Boss was evidently wrong. The young man was in despair. The sight of a ruined hut beside the pathway conjured up a fresh idea. He grasped at it as a drowning man to a straw.

'Cockney Jack built that,' he remarked. 'Lived there till he died.'

'What did he die off?' asked his companion.

'Three star brandy,' said Abe

decisively. 'I used to come over of a night when he was bad and sit by him. Poor chap! he had a wife and two children in Putney. He'd rave, and call me Polly, by the hour. He was cleaned out, hadn't a red cent; but the boys collected rough gold enough to see him through. He's buried there in that shaft; that was his claim, so we just dropped him down it an' filled it up. Put down his pick too, an' a spade an' a bucket, so's he'd feel kinder perky and at home.'

Miss Carrie seemed more interested now.

'Do they often die like that?' she asked.

'Well, brandy kills many; but there's more get's dropped—shot, you know.'

'I don't mean that. Do many men die alone and miserable down there, with no one to care for them?' and she pointed to the cluster of houses beneath them. 'Is there any one dying now? It is awful to think of.'

'There's none as I knows on likely to throw up their hand.'

'I wish you wouldn't use so much slang, Mr. Durton,' said Carrie, looking up at him reprovingly out of her violet eyes. It was strange what an air of proprietorship this young lady was gradually assuming towards her gigantic companion. 'You know it isn't polite. You should get a dictionary and learn the proper words.'

'Ah, that's it,' said Bones apologetically. 'It's gettin' your hand on the proper one. When you've not got a steam drill, you've got to put up with a pick.'

'Yes, but it's easy if you really try. You could say that a man was "dying," or "moribund," if you like.'

'That's it,' said the miner enthusiastically. '"Moribund"!

That's a word. Why, you could lay over Boss Morgan in the matter of words. "Moribund!" There's some sound about that.'

Carrie laughed.

'It's not the sound you must think of, but whether it will express your meaning. Seriously, Mr. Durton, if any one should be ill in the camp you must let me know. I can nurse, and I might be of use. You will, won't you?'

Abe readily acquiesced, and relapsed into silence as he pondered over the possibility of inoculating himself with some long and tedious disease. There was a mad dog reported from Buckhurst. Perhaps something might be done with that.

'And now I must say good-morning,' said Carrie, as they came to the spot where a crooked pathway branched off from the track and wound up to Azalea Villa. 'Thank you ever so much for escorting me.'

In vain Abe pleaded for the additional hundred yards, and adduced the overwhelming weight of the diminutive basket as a cogent reason. The young lady was inexorable. She had taken him too far out of his way already. She was ashamed of herself; she wouldn't hear of it.

So poor Bones departed in a mixture of many opposite feelings. He had interested her. She had spoken kindly to him. But then she had sent him away before there was any necessity; she couldn't care much about him if she would do that. I think he might have felt a little more cheerful, however, had he seen Miss Carrie Sinclair as she watched his retiring figure from the garden-gate with a loving look upon her saucy face, and a mischievous smile at his bent head and desponding appearance.

The Colonial Bar was the favourite haunt of the inhabitants of Harvey's Sluice in their hours of relaxation. There had been a fierce competition between it and the rival establishment termed the Grocery, which, in spite of its innocent appellation, aspired also to dispense spirituous refreshments. The importation of chairs into the latter had led to the appearance of a settee in the former. Spittoons appeared in the Grocery against a picture in the Bar, and, as the frequenters expressed it, the honours were even. When, however, the Grocery led a window-curtain, and its opponent returned a snuggery and a mirror, the game was declared to be in favour of the latter, and Harvey's Sluice showed its sense of the spirit of the proprietor by withdrawing their custom from his opponent.

Though every man was at liberty to swagger into the Bar itself, and bask in the shimmer of its many coloured bottles, there was a general feeling that the snuggery, or special apartment, should be reserved for the use of the more prominent citizens. It was in this room that committees met, that opulent companies were conceived and born, and that inquiries were generally held. The latter, I regret to state, was, in 1861, a pretty frequent ceremony at the Sluice; and the findings of the coroner were sometimes characterised by a fine breezy originality. Witness when Bully Burke, a notorious desperado, was shot down by a quiet young medical man, and a sympathetic jury brought in that 'the deceased had met his death in an ill-advised attempt to stop a pistol-ball while in motion,' a verdict which was looked upon as a triumph of jurisprudence in the camp, as simultaneously exonerating the culprit,

and adhering to the rigid and undeniable truth.

On this particular evening there was an assemblage of notabilities in the snugger, though no such pathological ceremony had called them together. Many changes had occurred of late which merited discussion; and it was in this chamber, gorgeous in all the effete luxury of the mirror and settee, that Harvey's Sluice was wont to exchange ideas. The recent cleansing of the population was still causing some ferment in men's minds. Then there was Miss Sinclair and her movements to be commented on, and the paying lead in the Conemara, and the recent rumours of bushrangers. It was no wonder that the leading men in the township had come together in the Colonial Bar.

The rangers were the present subject of discussion. For some few days rumours of their presence had been flying about, and an uneasy feeling had pervaded the colony. Physical fear was a thing little known in Harvey's Sluice. The miners would have turned out to hunt down the desperadoes with as much zest as if they had been so many kangaroos. It was the presence of a large quantity of gold in the town which caused anxiety. It was felt that the fruits of their labour must be secured at any cost. Messages had been sent over to Buckhurst for as many troopers as could be spared, and in the mean time the main street of the Sluice was paraded at night by volunteer sentinels.

A fresh impetus had been given to the panic by the report brought in to-day by Jim Struggles. Jim was of an ambitious and aspiring turn of mind, and after gazing in silent disgust at his last week's clean up, he had metaphorically shaken the clay of Harvey's Sluice

from his feet, and had started off into the woods with the intention of prospecting round until he could hit upon some likely piece of ground for himself. Jim's story was that he was sitting upon a fallen trunk eating his mid-day damper and rusty bacon, when his trained ear had caught the clink of horses' hoofs. He had hardly time to take the precaution of rolling off the tree and crouching down behind it, before a troop of men came riding down through the bush, and passed within a stone-throw of him.

'There was Bill Smeaton and Murphy Duff,' said Struggles, naming two notorious ruffians; 'and there was three more that I couldn't rightly see. And they took the trail to the right, and looked like business all over, with their guns in their hands.'

Jim was submitted to a searching cross-examination that evening; but nothing could shake his testimony or throw a further light upon what he had seen. He told the story several times and at long intervals; and though there might be a pleasing variety in the minor incidents, the main facts were always identically the same. The matter began to look serious.

There were a few, however, who were loudly sceptical as to the existence of the rangers, and the most prominent of these was a young man who was perched on a barrel in the centre of the room, and was evidently one of the leading spirits in the community. We have already seen that dark curling hair, lack-lustre eye, and thin cruel lip, in the person of Black Tom Ferguson, the rejected suitor of Miss Sinclair. He was easily distinguishable from the rest of the party by a tweed coat, and other symptoms of effeminacy in his dress, which might have brought him into disrepute had

he not, like Abe Durton's partner, early established the reputation of being a quietly desperate man. On the present occasion he seemed somewhat under the influence of liquor, a rare occurrence with him, and probably to be ascribed to his recent disappointment. He was almost fierce in his denunciation of Jim Struggles and his story.

'It's always the same,' he said; 'if a man meets a few travellers in the bush, he's bound to come back raving about rangers. If they'd seen Struggles there, they would have gone off with a long yarn about a ranger crouching behind a tree. As to recognising people riding fast among tree trunks—it is an impossibility.'

Struggles, however, stoutly maintained his original assertion, and all the sarcasms and arguments of his opponent were thrown away upon his stolid complacency. It was noticed that Ferguson seemed unaccountably put out about the whole matter. Something seemed to be on his mind, too; for occasionally he would spring off his perch and pace up and down the room with an abstracted and very forbidding look upon his swarthy face. It was a relief to every one when suddenly catching up his hat, and wishing the company a curt 'Good-night,' he walked off through the bar, and into the street beyond.

'Seems kinder put out,' remarked Long McCoy.

'He can't be afeard of the rangers, surely,' said Joe Shamus, another man of consequence, and principal shareholder of the El Dorado.

'No, he's not the man to be afraid,' answered another. 'There's something queer about him the last day or two. He's been long trips in the woods without any tools. They do say that the assy-

er's daughter has chucked him over.'

'Quite right too. A darned sight too good for him,' remarked several voices.

'It's odds but he has another try,' said Shamus. 'He's a hard man to beat when he's set his mind on a thing.'

'Abe Durton's the horse to win,' remarked Houlahan, a little bearded Irishman. 'It's sivin to four I'd be willin' to lay on him.'

'And you'd be afther losing your money, a-vich,' said a young man with a laugh. 'She'll want more brains than ever Bones had in his skull, you bet.'

'Who's seen Bones to-day?' asked McCoy.

'I've seen him,' said the young miner. 'He came round all through the camp asking for a dictionary—wanted to write a letter likely.'

'I saw him readin' it,' said Shamus. 'He came over to me an' told me he'd struck something good at the first show. Showed me a word about as long as your arm—"abdicate," or something.'

'It's a rich man he is now, I suppose,' said the Irishman.

'Well, he's about made his pile. He holds a hundred feet of the Conemara, and the shares go up every hour. If he'd sell out he'd be about fit to go home.'

'Guess he wants to take somebody home with him,' said another. 'Old Joshua wouldn't object, seein' that the money is there.'

I think it has been already recorded in this narrative that Jim Struggles, the wandering prospector, had gained the reputation of being the wit of the camp. It was not only in airy badinage, but in the conception and execution of more pretentious practical pleasures that Jim had earned his reputation. His adventure in the

morning had caused a certain stagnation in his usual flow of humour; but the company and his potatoes were gradually restoring him to a more cheerful state of mind. He had been brooding in silence over some idea since the departure of Ferguson, and he now proceeded to evolve it to his expectant companions.

'Say, boys,' he began. 'What day's this?'

'Friday, ain't it?'

'No, not that. What day of the month?'

'Darned if I know!'

'Well, I'll tell you now. It's the first o' April. I've got a calendar in the hut as says so.'

'What if it is?' said several voices.

'Well, don't you see, it's All Fools' day. Couldn't we fix up some little joke on some one, eh? Couldn't we get a laugh out of it? Now there's old Bones, for instance; he'll never smell a rat. Couldn't we send him off somewhere and watch him go maybe? We'd have something to chaff him on for a month to come, eh?'

There was a general murmur of assent. A joke, however poor, was always welcome to the Sluice. The broader the point, the more thoroughly was it appreciated. There was no morbid delicacy of feeling in the gulches.

'Where shall we send him?' was the query.

Jim Struggles was buried in thought for a moment. Then an unhallowed inspiration seemed to come over him, and he laughed uproariously, rubbing his hands between his knees in the excess of his delight.

'Well, what is it?' asked the eager audience.

'See here, boys. There's Miss Sinclair. You was saying as Abe's gone on her. She don't fancy him much you think. Sup-

pose we write him a note—send it him to-night, you know.'

'Well, what then?' said McCoy.

'Well, pretend the note is from her, d'y'e see? Put her name at the bottom. Let on as she wants him to come up an' meet her in the garden at twelve. He's bound to go. He'll think she wants to go off with him. It'll be the biggest thing played this year.'

There was a roar of laughter. The idea conjured up of honest Bones mooning about in the garden, and of old Joshua coming out to remonstrate with a double-barrelled shot-gun, was irresistibly comic. The plan was approved of unanimously.

'Here's pencil and here's paper,' said the humorist. 'Who's goin' to write the letter?'

'Write it yourself, Jim,' said Shamus.

'Well, what shall I say?'

'Say what you think right.'

'I don't know how she'd put it,' said Jim, scratching his head in great perplexity. 'However, Bones will never know the differ. How will this do? "Dear old man. Come to the garden at twelve to-night, else I'll never speak to you again," eh?'

'No, that's not the style,' said the young miner. 'Mind, she's a lass of eddication. She'd put it kinder flowery and soft.'

'Well, write it yourself,' said Jim sulkily, handing him over the pencil.

'This is the sort of thing,' said the miner, moistening the point of it in his mouth. '"When the moon is in the sky—"

'There it is. That's bully,' from the company.

"And the stars a-shinin' bright, meet, O meet me, Adolphus, by the garden-gate at twelve."

'His name ain't Adolphus,' objected a critic.

'That's how the poetry comes in,' said the miner. 'It's kinder fanciful, d'ye see. Sounds a darned sight better than Abe. Trust him for guessing who she means. I'll sign it Carrie. There!'

This epistle was gravely passed round the room from hand to hand, and reverentially gazed upon as being a remarkable production of the human brain. It was then folded up and committed to the care of a small boy, who was solemnly charged under dire threats to deliver it at the shanty, and to make off before any awkward questions were asked him. It was only after he had disappeared in the darkness that some slight compunction visited one or two of the company.

'Ain't it playing it rather low on the girl?' said Shamus.

'And rough on old Bones?' suggested another.

However, these objections were overruled by the majority, and disappeared entirely upon the appearance of a second jorum of whisky. The matter had almost been forgotten by the time that Abe had received his note, and was spelling it out with a palpitating heart under the light of his solitary candle.

That night has long been remembered in Harvey's Sluice. A fitful breeze was sweeping down from the distant mountains, moaning and sighing among the deserted claims. Dark clouds were hurrying across the moon, one moment throwing a shadow over the landscape, and the next allowing the silvery radiance to shine down, cold and clear, upon the little valley, and bathe in a weird mysterious light the great stretch of bushland on either side of it. A great loneliness seemed to rest on

the face of Nature. Men remarked afterwards on the strange eerie atmosphere which hung over the little town.

It was in the darkness that Abe Durtion sallied out from his little shanty. His partner, Boss Morgan, was still absent in the bush, so that beyond the ever-watchful Blinky there was no living being to observe his movements. A feeling of mild surprise filled his simple soul that his angel's delicate fingers could have formed those great straggling hieroglyphics; however, there was the name at the foot, and that was enough for him. She wanted him, no matter for what, and with a heart as pure and as heroic as any knight-errant, this rough miner went forth at the summons of his love.

He groped his way up the steep winding track which led to Azalea Villa. There was a little clump of small trees and shrubs about fifty yards from the entrance of the garden. Abe stopped for a moment when he had reached them in order to collect himself. It was hardly twelve yet, so that he had a few minutes to spare. He stood under their dark canopy peering at the white house vaguely outlined in front of him. A plain enough little dwelling-place to any prosaic mortal, but girt with reverence and awe in the eyes of the lover.

The miner paused under the shade of the trees, and then moved on to the garden-gate. There was no one there. He was evidently rather early. The moon was shining brightly now, and the country round was as clear as day. Abe looked past the little villa at the road which ran like a white winding streak over the brow of the hill. A watcher behind could have seen his square athletic figure standing out sharp and

clear. Then he gave a start, as if he had been shot, and staggered up against the little gate beside him.

He had seen something which caused even his sunburned face to become a shade paler as he thought of the girl so near him. Just at the bend of the road, not two hundred yards away, he saw a dark moving mass coming round the curve, and lost in the shadow of the hill. It was but for a moment; yet in that moment the quick perception of the practised woodman had realised the whole situation. It was a band of horsemen bound for the villa; and what horsemen would ride so by night save the terror of the woodlands—the dreaded rangers of the bush?

It is true that on ordinary occasions Abe was as sluggish in his intellect as he was heavy in his movements. In the hour of danger, however, he was as remarkable for cool deliberation as for prompt and decisive action. As he advanced up the garden he rapidly reckoned up the chances against him. There were half a dozen of the assailants at the most moderate computation, all desperate and fearless men. The question was whether he could keep them at bay for a short time and prevent their forcing a passage into the house. We have already mentioned that sentinels had been placed in the main street of the town. Abe reckoned that help would be at hand within ten minutes of the firing of the first shot.

Were he inside the house he could confidently reckon on holding his own for a longer period than that. Before he could rouse the sleepers and gain admission, however, the rangers would be upon him. He must content himself with doing his utmost. At

any rate he would show Carrie that if he could not talk to her he could at least die for her. The thought gave him quite a glow of pleasure, as he crept under the shadow of the house. He cocked his revolver. Experience had taught him the advantage of the first shot.

The road along which the rangers were coming ended at a wooden gate opening into the upper part of the assayer's little garden. This gate had a high acacia hedge on either side of it, and opened into a short walk also lined by impassable thorny walls. Abe knew the place well. One resolute man might, he thought, hold the passage for a few minutes until the assailants broke through elsewhere and took him in the rear. At any rate, it was his best chance. He passed the front door, but forbore to give any alarm. Sinclair was an elderly man, and would be of little assistance in such a desperate struggle as was before him, and the appearance of lights in the house would warn the rangers of the resistance awaiting them. O for his partner the Boss, for Chicago Bill, for any one of twenty gallant men who would have come at his call and stood by him in such a quarrel! He turned into the narrow pathway. There was the well-remembered wooden gate; and there, perched upon the gate, languidly swinging his legs backwards and forwards, and peering down the road in front of him, was Mr. John Morgan, the very man for whom Abe had been longing from the bottom of his heart.

There was short time for explanations. A few hurried words announced that the Boss, returning from his little tour, had come across the rangers riding on their mission of darkness, and overhearing their destination, had

managed by hard running and knowledge of the country to arrive before them. 'No time to alarm any one,' he explained, still panting from his exertions; 'must stop them ourselves—not come for swag—come for your girl. Only over our bodies, Bones,' and with these few broken words the strangely assorted friends shook hands and looked lovingly into each other's eyes, while the tramp of the horses came down to them on the fragrant breeze of the woods.

There were six rangers in all. One who appeared to be leader rode in front, while the others followed in a body. They flung themselves off their horses when they were opposite the house, and after a few muttered words from their captain, tethered the animals to a small tree, and walked confidently towards the gate.

Boss Morgan and Abe were crouching down under the shadow of the hedge, at the extreme end of the narrow passage. They were invisible to the rangers, who evidently reckoned on meeting little resistance in this isolated house. As the first man came forwards and half turned to give some order to his comrades both the friends recognised the stern profile and heavy moustache of Black Ferguson, the rejected suitor of Miss Carrie Sinclair. Honest Abe made a mental vow that he at least should never reach the door alive.

The ruffian stepped up to the gate and put his hand upon the latch. He started as a stentorian 'Stand back!' came thundering out from among the bushes. In war, as in love, the miner was a man of few words.

'There's no road this way,' explained another voice with an infinite sadness and gentleness about it which was characteristic

of its owner when the devil was rampant in his soul. The ranger recognised it. He remembered the soft languid address which he had listened to in the billiard-room of the Buckhurst Arms, and which had wound up by the mild orator putting his back against the door, drawing a derringer, and asking to see the sharper who would dare to force a passage. 'It's that infernal fool Durton,' he said, 'and his white-faced friend.'

Both were well-known names in the country round. But the rangers were reckless and desperate men. They drew up to the gate in a body.

'Clear out of that!' said their leader in a grim whisper; 'you can't save the girl. Go off with whole skins while you have the chance.'

The partners laughed.

'Then curse you, come on!'

The gate was flung open and the party fired a struggling volley, and made a fierce rush towards the gravelled walk.

The revolvers cracked merrily in the silence of the night from the bushes at the other end. It was hard to aim with precision in the darkness. The second man sprang convulsively into the air, and fell upon his face with his arms extended, writhing horribly in the moonlight. The third was grazed in the leg and stopped. The others stopped out of sympathy. After all, the girl was not for them, and their heart was hardly in the work. Their captain rushed madly on, like a valiant blackguard as he was, but was met by a crashing blow from the butt of Abe Durton's pistol, delivered with a fierce energy which sent him reeling back among his comrades with the blood streaming from his shattered jaw, and his capacity

for cursing cut short at the very moment when he needed to draw upon it most.

'Don't go yet,' said the voice in the darkness.

However, they had no intention of going yet. A few minutes must elapse, they knew, before Harvey's sluice could be upon them. There was still time to force the door if they could succeed in mastering the defenders. What Abe had feared came to pass. Black Ferguson knew the ground as well as he did. He ran rapidly along the hedge, and the five crashed through it where there was some appearance of a gap. The two friends glanced at each other. Their flank was turned. They stood up like men who knew their fate and did not fear to meet it.

There was a wild medley of dark figures in the moonlight, and a ringing cheer from well-known voices. The humorists of Harvey's sluice had found something even more practical than the joke which they had come to witness. The partners saw the faces of friends beside them—Shamus, Struggles, M'Coy. There was a desperate rally, a sweeping fiery rush, a cloud of smoke, with pistol-shots and fierce oaths ringing out of it, and when it lifted, a single dark shadow flying for dear life to the shelter of the broken hedge was the only ranger upon his feet within the little garden. But there was no sound of triumph among the victors; a strange hush had come over them, and a murmur as of grief—for there, lying across the threshold which he had fought so gallantly to defend, lay poor Abe, the loyal and simple hearted, breathing heavily with a bullet through his lungs.

He was carried inside with all the rough tenderness of the mines.

There were men there, I think, who would have borne his hurt to have had the love of that white girlish figure, which bent over the blood-stained bed and whispered so softly and so tenderly in his ear. Her voice seemed to rouse him. He opened his dreamy blue eyes and looked about him. They rested on her face.

'Played out,' he murmured; 'pardon, Carrie, morib—' and with a faint smile he sank back upon the pillow.

However, Abe failed for once to be as good as his word. His hardy constitution asserted itself, and he shook off what might in a weaker man have proved a deadly wound. Whether it was the balmy air of the woodlands which came sweeping over a thousand miles of forest into the sick man's room, or whether it was the little nurse who tended him so gently, certain it is that within two months we heard that he had realised his shares in the Conemara, and gone from Harvey's sluice and the little shanty upon the hill for ever.

I had the advantage a short time afterwards of seeing an extract from the letter of a young lady named Amelia, to whom we have made a casual allusion in the course of our narrative. We have already broken the privacy of one feminine epistle, so we shall have fewer scruples in glancing at another. 'I was bridesmaid,' she remarks, 'and Carrie looked charming' (underlined) 'in the veil and orange blossoms. Such a man, he is, twice as big as your Jack, and he was so funny, and blushed, and dropped the prayer-book. And when they asked the question you could have heard him roar "I do!" at the other end of George-street. His best man was a darling' (twice underlined). 'So quiet and hand-

some and nice. Too gentle to take care of himself among those rough men, I am sure.' I think it quite possible that in the fullness of time Miss Amelia managed to take upon herself the care of our old friend Mr. Jack Morgan, commonly known as the Boss.

A tree is still pointed out at the bend as Ferguson's gum-tree. There is no need to enter into unsavoury details. Justice is short and sharp in primitive colonies, and the dwellers in Harvey's Sluice were a serious and practical race.

It is still the custom for a select party to meet on a Saturday evening in the snugger of the Colonial Bar. On such occasions,

if there be a stranger or guest to be entertained, the same solemn ceremony is always observed. Glasses are charged in silence; there is a tapping of the same upon the table, and then, with a deprecating cough, Jim Struggles comes forward and tells the tale of the April joke, and of what came of it. There is generally conceded to be something very artistic in the way in which he breaks off suddenly at the close of his narrative by waving his bumper in the air with 'An' here's to Mr. and Mrs. Bones. God bless 'em!' a sentiment in which the stranger, if he be a prudent man, will most cordially acquiesce.

A. CONAN DOYLE, M.B.

THE JASMINE WREATH

('COJO JASMIN Y CLAVEL').

Freely translated from the Spanish of Don Manuel del Rio.

JASMINE with gilly-flow'rs I wreath,
My lips his name oft fondly breathe.

O crimson gilly-flow'rets sweet,
O'er which the wanton zephyrs blow,
Bright tokens my true love to greet,
Tell him e'en thus my heart doth glow!
O jasmine, pure as virgin snow,
Thy sweetest perfumes o'er him breathe,
Say, like thy petals I am pale,
And, yearning, ever weep and wail—
Jasmine with gilly-flow'rs I wreath.

A thousand blossoms, gemmed with dew,
Now 'neath the vernal sun are born,
All rich in perfume, gay of hue—
Alas! their beauty will be gone
Ere doth arise another morn!
Tell me, my fragrant jasmine-wreath,
Tell me, O gilly-flow'rets red,
Is Love's bloom, too, so quickly shed?
My lips his name oft fondly breathe!

BARONESS SWIFT.

ON THE QUAI VOLTAIRE.

A Leaf from a Book Collector's Note-Book.

THERE was a time, some eighteen or twenty years ago, when early rising was not only considered a duty, but practised as a regular habit, by Parisian book-collectors. In those days they had an object in being beforehand with their colleagues; for was not the hour between seven and eight A.M. the only possible opportunity of inspecting the contents of the wooden boxes exposed on the parapet of the quay, and extracting therefrom some precious Elzevir or other typographical rarity before the main body of loungers had started on their morning ramble? A motley assemblage they were, those ardent searchers after literary blue dahlias, old and young, rich and poor, from such aristocratic book-worms as Messieurs de Labedoyère, Soleinne, and Saint-Mauris down to Francisque, the actor of the Gaité, and that indefatigable and never-failing *habitué*, the print-seller Sieurin, keenest and most astute of bibliomaniacs! The student on his way to the Sorbonne; the German professor, attired in strangely-cut garments, with pockets as capacious as those of Colline in Murger's *Vie de Bohème*; the bargain-hunters of high and low degree, hurrying from all quarters of the city to the general place of rendezvous, paced up and down with eager glance along the broad strip of pavement extending from the Pont Royal to the Rue des Saints Pères, then known, as now, by the name of Quai Voltaire.

One of these miscellaneous visi-

tors, an elderly Englishman, was invariably among the first to arrive and usually the very last to depart. Formerly a medical man in good practice, he had long since abandoned the healing profession for that of book-collector, and devoted to his favourite pursuit not only his time, but every penny he could scrape together. Dr. S. had at one period made his mark in literature, and, besides contributing to divers scientific journals, had compiled for a collection of Sheridan's plays a comprehensive biography of the dramatist; but latterly his pen had remained idle, and he had become a sort of *brocanteur*, picking up scarce editions for a few sous, and disposing of them afterwards at a considerable profit to less experienced amateurs both in Paris and in London. Once, he told me, by an unheard stroke of good fortune, he had discovered amid a heap of odd volumes no less a treasure than an original copy of Corneille's *Illustre Théâtre*, and had resold it on the same day for a thousand francs; but, as he remarked with a disconsolate shake of the head, 'such windfalls never happen to a man twice.' My acquaintance with him was of the slightest, and I eventually lost sight of him altogether; but I afterwards heard that, having frittered away in speculations the slender means he possessed, he had been reduced to subsist on the charity of those who had known him in better days, and had ultimately disappeared, no one could tell whither.

Little by little the side of the Quai Voltaire bordering the river has lost its importance in the eyes of book-collectors, the localities now generally selected for their researches being the Quai Malaquais and the immediate neighbourhood of the Pont des Arts; they are, however, scarcely so early birds as of yore, nor, to say the truth, have the contents of the boxes been of late years sufficiently tempting to warrant the matutinal exertion in which their predecessors used to delight. Most of the ancient dealers, too, have migrated elsewhere, almost the sole remaining relic of the past still occupying his accustomed post, exactly where the *citadine* drivers, with their glazed hats and scarlet waistcoats, calmly smoke their pipes while waiting for a fare, being a tall meagre individual, whom, at whatever hour you may chance to pass, you will invariably find with a cigar in his mouth. But even he has a dejected appearance, and his stock-in-trade mainly consists of a few well-thumbed novels or plays with repasted covers, or perhaps, by way of variety, a stray copy of that palpitating production *L'Almanach de Liège*.

But we have not yet done with the Quai Voltaire. Crossing the road, and treading gingerly on the rough and uneven stones which form the foot pavement, we have before us a long vista of book and print sellers, interspersed with two largely patronised wine-shops, a glove manufacturer, three or four dealers in curiosities, a *bureau de tabac*, and an hotel, taking its name from the presiding genius of the quarter, the philosopher of Ferney. Of these various items only one, a Triton among minnows, particularly claims our attention. It is to all appearance a modest and unpretending estab-

lishment, differing neither externally nor internally from the ordinary run of second-hand literary dépôts, and so uncomfortably encumbered with volumes piled up in every direction from floor to ceiling, that the first thought of a stranger on entering the low-roofed ill-lighted shop is to get out of it again as quickly as possible. Few, indeed, save those initiated in such matters, would be likely to imagine the existence, in so unpromising a locality, of as valuable a stock-in-trade as any in the capital, or to credit its owner with being one of the best and acutest book connoisseurs in republican France. He is a Norman, of course—for, with scarcely an exception, what Parisian book or print seller is not?—and 'hails,' no doubt, like the great majority of his colleagues, from the neighbourhood of Coutances, a district which seems to enjoy the monopoly of supplying the French metropolis with a constant succession of youthful recruits, each of whom on his arrival readily finds a home with some uncle or cousin already established in business, and in due course of time sets up for himself. Such has been the case with our friend of the Quai Voltaire, who, by the way, is of noble descent, and although a professed admirer of the principles of '89, is, we suspect, rather proud than otherwise of the patrician 'de' prefixed to his name. By dint of unwearied industry and no slight amount of natural capacity he has from small beginnings gradually reached the top of the tree, and become an acknowledged authority on all subjects connected with his craft.

While we are examining his latest acquisitions, a tall, good-looking, but somewhat slovenly attired individual enters the shop, in whom we recognise at a glance

the realistic author of *La Fille Elisa*, M. Edmond de Goncourt; he is in quest of documents relating to the celebrated singer Madame de St. Huberty, whose biography, forming a pendant to that of her contemporary Sophie Arnould, he is on the point of publishing. Presently in walks a remarkably short and stout personage, with keen twinkling eyes and an unctuous smile; this is no other than the genial critic of the *Monde Illustré*, one of the liveliest of modern humorists, and the most profound *gourmet* in Paris or out of it—in a word, Charles Monselet. He spots at once an *Almanach des Spectacles* for 1752, which is lying on the counter, and both he and M. de Goncourt being

dramatic enthusiasts, the conversation naturally turns on their favourite topic. For upwards of an hour a running fire of anecdote and reminiscence delights not only those already present, but more than one new arrival; until Monselet, who never forgets what to him is the important business of the day, looks at his watch, opines that it is near dinner-time, and waddles over the Pont Royal towards his beloved boulevard; while his colleague, for whom gastronomy has little charm, shapes his course along the quay, possibly to meditate on some novel conception calculated to throw into the shade even the arch-priest of realism, Emile Zola.

C. H.

THE STORY OF A MINIATURE.

You see that portrait yonder—the miniature that lies
In a case of red morocco, among the things I prize;
'Tis worthy of attention. You should examine it;
For the face is young and handsome, and the painting's exquisite.

The lips seem almost speaking, the eyes look quite alive;
His age? I should not put it at more than twenty-five.
The blue coat and brass buttons so quaint, you say? Well, yes;
But *then* it was the fashion to wear that kind of dress.

The frame is blue enamel, with gold rim—very plain—
And just a ring—gold also—through which to pass a chain;
That face was clearly painted for *somebody* to wear;
For if you'll look behind it, you'll find a lock of hair.

It bears a name and numbers, that mark a certain date;
But they could tell me nothing about his life and fate.
For years I knew this only—he lived till seventy-two;
I knew he never married, and that was *all* I knew.

I wondered what the story, and whose the lock of hair;
And whose the hand that cut it, and who had placed it there;
Till once when I was searching for something else, I found
A bundle of old papers with a silken thread around.

The ink was very faded, the leaves were brown with age,
And a scent, half sweet, half musty, pervaded every page.
They told a piteous story, and through it all *one* name,
As that behind the picture I recognised the same.

I took away the papers, and read them in the dusk;
I liked their sickly odour of mustiness and musk,
And I puzzled out the writing for an hour and a half,
And pondered o'er the story that read like an epitaph!

You may call it what you will, dear—a fancy or a dream;
It matters very little if things *are* or only *seem*;
But, as I sat that evening, I felt no more alone
Than at this very moment, with your hand within mine own.

The house must then be haunted? Ah, well! and if it be?
Perhaps most houses are so, for those with eyes to see.
I am not superstitious—and yet I can declare
I've seen ghosts in this chamber, heard steps upon this stair.

So—you would like to hear it, this tale? I thought you would.
To hear of high devotion must surely do one good!
Such deeds *have* been and *will* be, so long as Love shall last,
To link the dead and living, the Present and the Past.

'Twas on a summer's evening, while the daylight lingering shone,
Within this very chamber a maiden sat alone,
Beside the open window where the honeysuckles climb
Along the stone balcony in the early summer-time.

Her dress was plain white muslin with cherry ribbons gay—
Short sleeves and long black mittens, in the fashion of the day;
And clasped between her fingers two rosebuds, red and white,
Whose petals, like her eyelids, were wet with tear-drops bright.

A step—a knock that waits not for any answering word,
And she turned and looked up quickly and trembled like a bird,
To greet the man who entered—blue coat and powdered hair,
Just as he's represented in the portrait lying there.

Three strides across the chamber that brought him to her side,
And he stooped and clasped her fondly, with all a lover's pride;
'And did you weep, my darling, to think I should delay?
But let me kiss those tear-drops—What! would you say me nay?'

With passionate sobs she answered, 'O love, it may not be!
They've fathomed it, the secret, that dwells 'twixt you and me;
And he, my eldest brother, has sworn a fearful oath
To have your very life-blood, ere we shall plight our troth!'

His laugh rang loud and scornful: 'The words, I grant, are grim,
But let him curse and threaten, what do I care for him?
So be *your* glance is kindly, so be *your* heart is true,
What need for me to ask *him* if I may come and woo?'

He paused, then went on boldly, yet in a softened tone,
As he took her little fingers and held them in his own:
'You owe them naught, these brothers, these men who brag and swear;
Trust all to me, and leave them: have you courage? will you dare?'

No! lest *my* life be perilled! My sweet! yet if *you* stay,
The house that holds my treasure I shall visit, come what may;
So anyhow you see, dear, the chances are I die,
But the chance is one to twenty if we risk it now and fly.

I saw your brothers riding together o'er the hill
(*'Twas* only at a distance), and the house is very still;
For the servants all are idling down on the bowling-green:
No moment could be better if we would not be seen.'

Her eyes returned him answer, though not a word she spoke,
But silently allowed him to wrap her in her cloak;
And silently she followed: yea, had he said she must,
She'd have followed him for ever, so boundless was her trust.

A sound of angry voices, a hurried heavy tread,
That woke the sleeping echoes of the vaulted roof o'erhead ;
And across the centre doorway there stood her brothers both,
With fury on their foreheads, and on their lips an oath.

It may be some suspicion had set them on the track,
Or some unlooked-for errand had brought them hurrying back ;
I know not if it were so ; but this is all I know,
They met their sister's lover as men who meet their foe.

They did not give a challenge, they did not pause to prate,
Their passion was too deadly, and too intense their hate ;
They recked not he was 'fenceless ; why should they shrink or care ?
They had no thought of mercy, they did not mean to spare.

He knew they sought his life-blood, he knew that he must die ;
But he would not stoop in anger to question or deny.
A sharp report—an echo—a curling wreath of smoke,
While a single shriek of anguish across the stillness broke !

But when it cleared, that smoke-wreath, with horror they stood still
To see the ghastly ending of their foul resolve to kill ;
For she, their sweet young sister, shot through the heart lay *dead*,
While he stood o'er her scathless whose blood they'd sworn to shed.

And then his face of anguish was a fearful sight to see !
'O God ! where was the justice to let her die for me !
And did you think, my darling, by dying thus to save ?
Or did you hope at least, love, to share with me my grave ?

Stand back ! Stand back, I warn ye ! Ye twain have played your part ;
I have the right, I only, to hold her to my heart !
Then on the pale fair forehead he pressed one lingering kiss,
For her death and deep devotion had made her wholly his.

Around her neck he found it, by a silken ribbon tied—
The little painted portrait of him for whom she died ;
His was the hand removed it, as *his* had placed it there,
And *his* the hand that severed that single lock of hair.

So that's the piteous story yon picture speaks to us :
Of these two hapless lovers, one died a victim thus ;
The other, as I told you, lived on till seventy-two ;
But I know he never married—his love was *far* too true.

And the little painted portrait among my treasures dwells,
Not for its painting merely, but for the tale it tells ;
For half the things we keep, dear, we only prize at last
As links to bind the ages, the Present and the Past.

HARRIET L. CHILDE-PEMBERTON.